1-1-2004

"Coming into my own as a teacher" : English teachers' experiences in their first year of teaching.

Jennifer Susan Cook
University of Massachusetts Amherst

"COMING INTO MY OWN AS A TEACHER": ENGLISH TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES IN THEIR FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING

A Dissertation Presented

by

JENNIFER SUSAN COOK

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 2004

School of Education

"COMING INTO MY OWN AS A TEACHER": ENGLISH TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES IN THEIR FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING

A Dissertation

by

JENNIFER SUSAN COOK

Approved as to style and content by:

Irving Seidman, Chair

Linda L. Griffin, Member

Anne Herrington, Member

Andrew Effrat, Dean
School of Education

DEDICATION

To my parents, Frank and Barbara Cook,
for the endless stream of love and support you have given me.

To Martin, my pillar of patience and perseverance,

And to Marlo Soledad Cook and Benjamin Aquila Bray Lawrence.
The future is yours.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to thank Martin for the sacrifices he has made in order for me to fulfill my goals. The support and respect he has shown for my work and my teaching have steadied me throughout my journey. My sincere appreciation is also due to Paige Bray. As my critical friend and colleague, she has given freely to me her time, energy, thoughtfulness, and generous spirit throughout my doctoral program, and for that I am grateful.

I also want to thank my dear family—Ike, Celia, Marlo, Karen, Steve, Lucas, Anne, Dave, Jacob, Sam, Mom, and Pop—for their continued support of my work. They have provided me with precious resources—laughter, love, and hope—during this arduous process.

I also extend my thanks to my friends and colleagues, Mary, Karen, Moira, Tina, Patrick, Maryellen, Darren, Ray, Tim, Julianne, and Rob for their generous friendship and critical colleagueship.

A special thank you to my advisor, Irv Seidman, for introducing me to phenomenology and to in-depth interviewing and for providing me with so many valuable professional opportunities during my time in the School of Education. I also want to extend my gratitude to the members of my committee, Linda Griffin and Anne Herrington, for their thoughtful feedback and confidence in my abilities.

Finally, I want to express my sincere thanks to my first-year teacher participants—Andrew, Barbara, Cathy, Ian, Maria, Meredith, Rebecca, Sarah, Tori, and Valerie. Their hopefulness, creative energy, and professional optimism helped to fuel me every step of the way.

ABSTRACT

"COMING INTO MY OWN AS A TEACHER":
ENGLISH TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES IN THEIR
FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING

MAY 2004

JENNIFER SUSAN COOK, B.A., AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

M.ED., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

ED.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Irving Seidman

Although the wealth of research on beginning teachers indicates that teachers' transitions from preservice to inservice are often fraught with complexity, the prevalent "sink-or-swim" approach to their entries into teaching does not usually recognize the developmental complexities of each individual teacher's experience. The developmental blindness that some educational stakeholders have developed in regard to beginning teachers is, in fact, vastly different from the way our society views "newness" or "beginnings" in other venues and forms. If stakeholders in education were to take new teachers seriously as learners, we would not expect the same from them as from veteran teachers, and we would, as a matter of regular practice, provide new teachers with adequate support that is rooted in the legitimate learning and developmental demands of each beginning teacher. Using a phenomenological framework and an in-depth interviewing methodology, I interviewed ten (10) first-year English teachers in order to illuminate the nature of the experience of the first year of teaching English. I explored what it is about the nature of the first-year of teaching that has made it such an infamously trying time emotionally, intellectually, and socially.

How does the culture of teaching "induct" its newest teachers? How do new English teachers experience their own learning and development in their first year in the classroom? What does the first year of teaching mean to those who experience it? I interviewed each participant on three separate occasions, with each interview lasting approximately 90 minutes. I audiotaped the interviews and transcribed them verbatim. I open-coded salient themes in the interview transcripts and arrived at 12 themes that cut across my participants' age, gender, and school context. Significant issues in my participants' experiences revealed several elements of the nature of the first-year of teaching English. I discuss how the constitutive elements of my participants' experiences in their first year can be incorporated into the development and implementation of more effective and more developmentally appropriate induction and support programs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS v

ABSTRACT vi

LIST OF TABLES x

LIST OF FIGURES xi

CHAPTER

1. TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING . . . 1

Introduction 1
Sink or Swim 6
Components of My Inquiry 8
Significance of this Study 12

2. REVIEW OF RESEARCH RELEVANT TO THE EXPERIENCES OF FIRST-YEAR ENGLISH TEACHERS 14

The Problematic Nature of Deficit-Based Research 15
The Two-Way Street of Teacher Socialization 18
Crafting an Identity as a Teacher: First-Year Teachers in Context 23

Teaching as Being Versus Teaching as Doing 25
Negotiating Ideals and Expectations as a Teacher 26
First-Year Teachers' Conceptions of English Language Arts 30

Building on Previous Research 33

3. METHODOLOGY 36

Personal Perspective 37
Phenomenological, In-Depth Interviewing 41
Interviewing Technique 44

Making Contact 46
Participant Selection 48

Making Sense of the Interviews 53

4. "COMING OUT OF MY SHELL": THE STRUGGLE TO CRAFT A TEACHER IDENTITY 57

Apprenticeship of Observation 61
Student Identity/Teacher Identity 66
Teaching & Performing: "Playing" the Role of the Adult Authority 69
"A Line in the Sand": Boundaries in Teacher-Student Relationships 76

5. NEGOTIATING TEACHER IDENTITY IN THE CLASSROOM: ENGLISH AS "THE MOTHER SUBJECT" 83

Building Bridges Through the English Language Arts 85
Developing a Critical Stance in English Class 92
High-Stakes Teaching of English 100

6. MEMBERS ONLY: FINDING ONE'S PLACE IN THE HIERARCHICAL POWER STRUCTURES OF SCHOOLS 108

Administrators' Impact on First-Year Teachers 110

Principals 110
English Department Chairs 115

Mentors' Influences on First-Year Teachers 118
The Impact of Colleagues 125

7. WHAT DOES TEACHING MEAN TO FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS? 137

The Rewards of Service 138
The "Long Haul" Attitude 146

8. DISCUSSION & REFLECTION 151

Embracing the Struggle: An Alternative View of Teacher Development . . . 151
Beginning Teacher Support 158
Class Issues in the Entrance to Teaching 161
Reflections on the Interview Process 164
Making the Work of Beginning Teachers Visible 167

APPENDIX: PORTRAITS OF TEACHER PARTICIPANTS 171

BIBLIOGRAPHY 183

LIST OF TABLES

Table Page

1. First-year teacher participants 50

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure Page

1. The Three Spheres of My Analysis of First-Year Teachers' Experiences 58

CHAPTER 1

TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING

Introduction

Transitions and rites of passage are a part of life. They are bound by cultural norms, beliefs, and values. Many cultural and religious customs mark young men and women's passage into adulthood; ritual ceremonies mark graduations from institutions and entrance into learned communities; births and deaths are celebrated and mourned publicly through showers and birthdays, wakes and funerals. Likewise, other—perhaps less dramatic—rites of passage are recognized privately or in the company of a small cohort or family group. A child's first attempt to walk, the first day of school, and a young man or woman's first year of college are celebrated as important transitions unto themselves. Whether large or small, these life transitions serve as poignant marks on our life timelines that indicate change, growth and development.

> ...those familiar with the contemporary educational system may well wonder what relevance the rites of passage...have to those who enter the teaching profession...By providing a universal cultural and social analog, an understanding of rites of passage can lead to a new perception of what happens to beginning teachers and also perhaps how badly they are inducted into their professional careers. (Eddy, 1969, p. 23)

The first year of teaching can be regarded as a professional rite of passage. It is, in fact, "different from what's come before and from what will come after" (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). The first year of classroom teaching marks a novice teacher's first, true independent ownership of a classroom and curriculum. Although she may have been prepared through traditional or alternative channels, many of the aspects of day-to-day teaching remain to be discovered and learned during the first year. Administrative tasks,

such as progress reports, report cards, and supply orders, may need to be learned on the job. Likewise, many aspects of planning, interacting with students, and grading may seem overwhelming to the novice teacher, as she now bears the full responsibility for teaching 80 to 100 students. Despite the benefits of teacher preparation, it has been shown that new teachers feel overwhelmed by teaching during their first year (Bullough, 1989; Dollase, 1992; Ganser, 1999; Hargreaves & Jacka, 1995; Rust, 1994; Ryan, 1970; Veenman, 1984).

The questions, challenges, and inadequacies that new teachers usually face point to the fact that beginning teachers have legitimate learning needs. In addition to learning how to handle many of the technical difficulties they face in their teaching, beginning teachers commonly have to learn how to think on their feet, how to size up problems, and how to assess their own teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). Perhaps most importantly, beginning teachers often grapple with the personal struggle to craft a public identity (Featherstone, 1993).

The first year of any endeavor, be it the first year as a teacher, lawyer, plumber, or business owner, has some intellectual and developmental parallels. First, the learning curve tends to be extremely high during the first year "on the job." Even if one has been trained in a trade or profession prior to the first year, the experience of the first year involves learning to meld training with reality, theory with practice. No schooling or training can provide one with everything she needs to know about a profession or trade. Many of the nuances and idiosyncratic bits of knowledge need to be gleaned on the job.

In many cases, first-year tradespeople and professionals have mentors to help them with the extreme learning curve of the first year. Medical interns are viewed as

novices and are usually taken under the wing of a senior staff member (Becker et al., 1961); beginning lawyers are eased into the profession by being assigned tedious document checks and brief writing in order to "learn the ropes" of the firm (Keates, 1997); novice tradespeople, such as electricians and carpenters, are usually put to work with a master and are required to work as apprentices before being let out on their own. Teaching is quite unique, though, in that it is one of the few jobs in which novices are expected to behave as experts (see, for example, Lortie, 1975; Feiman-Nemser, 1983; Kardos et al., 2001). On a first-year teacher's first day of school, she is expected to hold her own as any 10-year veteran might. It is only recently that the education community is opening up possibilities for novice teachers to apprentice, like a tradesperson, or to be "eased into the job" by being assigned a lighter teaching schedule.

Secondly, the first year of any endeavor involves growing into your own skin as a newly anointed teacher, doctor, lawyer, plumber, electrician or business owner. This process involves both socialization into some type of organization—the office where you work, your school, your law firm, the hospital, the shop—as well as a realization of and acceptance of your new identity as a professional person in a socially designed role. For example, the fledgling lawyer not only has to learn to work with others in his office as well as different sorts of clients, he also has to learn to view himself as a lawyer (Keates, 1997), a reflexive "skill" that rarely gets addressed in professional training or schooling. So, in the first year of any endeavor there is a sort of internal and external socialization that takes place—learning to work with those outside of yourself and learning to work within yourself as the professional that you have become.

Thirdly, the first year of any endeavor is bound to bring stumbling blocks and dilemmas, and it is vital for the novice to be prepared to weather these storms. This is perhaps why we refer to such rites of passage as a "sink or swim" process. The first year is a testing ground for determining who stays and who leaves, and it is generally those who are able to withstand the challenges and rough spots who end their first year of an endeavor with a willingness to return for a second year. Unfortunately in teaching, too many people who withstand their first year decide not to return, which leaves the nation's schools in constant need for qualified teachers.

Just as is common for people in our society to regard the college graduate, the first grade child, or the newly walking toddler as an individual making a difficult developmental transition, it should also be common for educators to recognize the developmental difficulties of learning to teach in the first year. Our collective notion of the first year of teaching, it seems me to, is vastly different from the way in which our society views "newness" or "beginnings" in other venues and forms. For example, think about how we collectively view a child's first year of life, or a child's first year of school, or a young adult's first year of college. We tend to see these "rites of passage" as years full of possibilities and potential.

These milestones are generally understood as developmentally important and, at the same time, challenging times. Thus, we watch in wonder as an infant develops and grows during her first years of life, and we take great pains to carefully balance her independence with a parent's gentle guidance. Likewise, teachers allow the kindergartener or first grader leeway in adapting to her new surroundings and peers, in adjusting to the routines of schools, and in negotiating the conflicts she is sure to

experience throughout her first full school year. Similarly, the first year college student is typically forgiven their mistakes, is supported by parents, advisers, friends and teachers, and is allowed the space and time to "figure out" what they want to become. The prevailing professional attitude toward beginning teachers provides a stark contrast to these other examples of developmental patience and support.

It is common practice for new teachers in a district to be given the most difficult students, the most "undesirable" classes, and the extracurricular responsibilities that no one else wants. In the best of worlds, the assumptions that govern these decisions are that the beginning teacher arrives for her first year with a toolkit for instant success and has "super teacher" capabilities, whereas she can calm the most disruptive child and can bring the least desirable curriculum to life. In the worst of worlds, and unfortunately all too often in reality, decisions to give the novice teacher the least desirable assignment are based on the entrenched hierarchy of power within a school. Veteran teachers are at the top of the hierarchy, thereby usually getting their pick of courses, duties, and extracurricular activities. The novice teachers are at the very bottom of the teacher hierarchy and therefore are given little choice and voice in determining what classes they will teach and what activities they will facilitate.

Whether first-year teachers begin teaching in the best or worst of worlds, so to speak, they are nonetheless treated as though they can hold their own as any 20-year veteran might. This misinterpretation of teacher preparation and readiness sullies the complexity of learning to teach, for "we misrepresent the process of learning to teach when we regard beginning teachers as finished products" (Feiman-Nemser, 2003) or when we take advantage of their lack of power within the school system. If stakeholders

in education were to take new teachers seriously as learners, we would not expect that same from them as from veteran teachers, and we would, as a matter of regular practice, provide new teachers with adequate support that is rooted in their unique situated learning needs.

Sink or Swim

As in decades past, there is currently a great deal of attention surrounding the retention and support of the nation's newest teachers, which has lead to numerous research studies that seek to describe, analyze, and interpret the experiences of beginning teachers. The literature abounds with studies that seek to determine beginning teachers' problems, concerns, and needs. Subsequently, the literature on beginning teachers also is filled with new induction models and support structures that are intended to address these needs and to support the retention of new teachers.

Although the wealth of research on learning to teach indicates that the transition from preservice to inservice is often fraught with complexity and difficulty, the paradigmatic theme of much of the educational research on the beginning years of teaching is one that does not recognize this developmental complexity. Instead, the first year of teaching is often referred to as a trial year, a year by which the rest of the school's faculty and administration can "test drive" the new teacher to see if he or she performs up to par. Studies of beginning teaching "legitimate a focus on…problems and concerns rather than on the core tasks of learning to teach" (Carter & Richardson, 1989). This problems-and-concerns paradigm is one in which the phrases "sink or swim," "trial by fire," and "baptism by fire" are commonplace. Within this framework,

the beginning teacher undergoes a rite of passage that is marked by isolation, personal and professional struggle, and little support from colleagues or administrators. If we imagine the first year of teaching as it is so commonly described with the above idioms, it is a private ordeal that tests one's true mettle. It would also seem to be an ordeal in which the product, the technical prowess of the novice teacher, is more important than the process, the developmental growth of the novice teacher throughout the first year.

To a certain extent, the popular use of metaphors such as "sink or swim" and "trial by fire" reflects our engrained cultural acceptance of the uncertain or difficult nature of beginning a career. Do we really intend the beginning years of teaching to be necessarily difficult and painful? "Sink or swim" was first used by Shakespeare in Henry IV, Part 1 (1:3):

> Earl of Worcester: …I'll read you matter deep and dangerous,
> As full of peril and adventurous spirit
> As to o'er-walk a current roaring loud
> On the unsteadfast footing of a spear.
>
> Hotspur: If he fall in, good night! Or sink or swim…

But, the idiom "sink or swim" has its origins in the former practice of throwing a suspected witch into deep water, often weighted down. If she sank, the suspected witch obviously died. But if she floated, she was considered in league with the devil and was promptly executed (Ammer, 1997). This is an interesting metaphor to describe the experiences of first-year teachers, especially as it alludes to a lose-lose situation. "Trial by fire" alludes to the medieval practice of determining a person's guilt by having them undergo a physically painful ordeal, such as walking barefoot through fire. "Baptism of fire" transfers the religious rite of baptism to various kinds of ordeals. At first, the

phrase signified the burning of martyrs at the stake, and in nineteenth century France it was used to describe a soldier's first combat experience (Ammer, 1997).

Taken on their own, such idioms may be shrugged off as well-worn figures of speech used to convey the nature of a difficult experience. Yet, as van Manen (1984) states regarding the importance analyzing idiomatic language:

> It is sometimes surprising how didactic language itself is if we allow ourselves to be attentive to even the most common of expressions associated with the phenomenon we wish to pursue. This should be no surprise since idiomatic phrases largely proceed phenomenologically: they are borne out of lived experience. (p. 54)

So, when considered as part and parcel of the conventional experience of many first-year teachers, these controlling idioms come to represent paradigmatic themes that codify the typical nature of teachers' struggles during the first year.

Components of My Inquiry

I am interested in teachers' stories that represent the struggles and negotiations of human existence: the struggle to know oneself, to know others, and to acquire knowledge; the complexities involved in carving out a life for oneself; the individual and social processes of teaching and learning; and negotiating the complex worlds of interpersonal relationships and organizational bureaucracies. And, as has been well documented in the literature, the first-year of teaching embodies many of these struggles, processes, and negotiations (e.g. Bullough, 1989; Featherstone, 1993; Johnson & Birkeland, 2002; Ryan, 1970; Stark, 1991).

Additionally, it strikes me that while the first year of teaching is an important developmental period for beginning teachers, we know very little about how one becomes a teacher, or rather, how one forms a sense of oneself as a teacher. Despite the

intentions of mandated induction programs, K-12 schools rarely provide the first-year teacher with the developmental guidance they really need, developmental guidance that reaches teachers' inner lives as well as their outer lives in classrooms. By presenting excerpts from first-year teachers that highlight the complexities, struggles, negotiations, and successes involved in their transitions from student to teacher, I hope that an eventual change in school organization will be realized, a change that Lightfoot (1983) speaks to in the following quote.

> Traditionally, schools have been organized around the developmental needs of children…I would argue that teachers should be given the same regard; that we should assume that they will change and need guidance, support, and relief from the heavy burdens. (p. 259)

In addition to examining the complexities embedded in the experience of the first year of teaching, I am interested in exploring several complex issues involved in the teaching of English language arts. One of these issues involves the somewhat amorphous nature of the English language arts curriculum, a curriculum that has changed its shape and size throughout the last 100 years (Applebee, 1974), as is indicated in this quote from Peter Elbow:

> So what is English?…What finally strikes me is the diversity of answers—so many different ways of defining English. Perhaps what really characterizes English is that it's the grab-bag, garbage-pail, everything-but-the-kitchen-sink discipline. Or, recasting this with the dignity that English professors love, English is particularly rich, complex, and many faceted…This can feel like a problem but it is also a particular kind of strength (Elbow, 1990, p. 110).

In Massachusetts, "English language arts" has come to include everything from reading and writing to media analysis and the study of media production. In many middle schools across the Commonwealth, courses formally known as "language arts" have been newly designated as courses in "literacy." This semantic difference, however

minor, comes in response to the Commonwealth's high-stakes graduation and promotion tool, the MCAS tests in language arts and mathematics. So, exploring how first-year teachers understand specific curricular and pedagogical changes within the current atmosphere of high-stakes testing is also of interest to me.

A related inquiry involves the exploration of the tensions that recent English education program graduates may face when they confront in their first year of teaching the harsh realities of state and district curricula, standardized testing, and teacher accountability. The realities of teaching English language arts in a school may or may not work to disrupt the vision of teaching English that the novice has developed throughout his or her preparation program (Britzman, 1991; Grossman, 1990). It is therefore important to examine the possible disruptions or adaptations that occur when a first-year English teacher's conception of English language arts intersects with a school or district's conception of how and why English language arts should be taught.

Studies on the experiences of first-year teachers have found that subject matter expertise takes a secondary role in the work of the beginning teacher. In fact, beginning teachers tend to push aside their content knowledge to make way for more urgent pedagogical issues, such as classroom management and student motivation (Lacey, 1977; Schempp, Sparkes, & Templin, 1993). If this were true, it would follow that first-year English teachers are so consumed by the immediacy of their day-to-day experience that their ability to conceptualize their subject matter would be diminished. So, a third interest is in exploring the ways in which first-year English teachers in secondary schools conceptualize the teaching of English and the role that English language arts subject matter plays in shaping their understandings of themselves as teachers.

The purpose of this dissertation study, therefore, is to explore the experiences of first-year English language arts teachers in order to better understand the nature, or the essence, of the experience of the first year of teaching English. I believe that in order to better understand how to support new teachers in this professional rite of passage, we must investigate what it is about the first-year of teaching that has made it an infamously trying time emotionally, intellectually, socially, and physically. So, in addition to my research question, "What is it like to be a first-year English teacher?" the following questions represent issues or topics I am interested in exploring in this study: How does the culture of teaching "induct" its newest teachers? How do new teachers experience their own learning and development during their first year in the classroom? What does the first year of teaching mean to those who experience it? In addition, I am interested in investigating the role that subject matter plays in first-year teachers' transitions into teaching. How do first-year teachers understand their role as English language arts teachers? What role does English language arts knowledge and curriculum play in the development of novice English teachers?

In listening to first-year teachers' narratives, we are bound to hear tales of both the intellectual and the emotional complexities of teaching. The process of coming to know oneself as a teacher involves dynamic transactions between many variables in a teacher's life, such as one's prior conceptions of teachers and teaching, one's experiences as a student, one's conceptions of the subject matter, the context of one's school, one's students, one's personal life, and one's colleagues.

Significance of this Study

Much of the literature on first-year teachers is framed by a specific focus, be it curriculum concerns, effects of teachers' preservice preparation, or formation of teachers' identities and roles. However, there is a dearth of literature on first-year teachers that seeks to gain a better understanding of the nature of the first-year of teaching through a phenomenological perspective. Under the auspices of phenomenology, we can explore and uncover the essence of the experience of the first year of teaching through the experiences of those who are embedded in it.

A phenomenological perspective allows us to come to a better understanding of "the world as we immediately experience it rather than as we conceptualize, categorize, or theorize about it" (van Manen, 1984, p. 38). Likewise, we can only uncover the essence of an experience through a study of "the particulars as they are encountered in lived experience" (van Manen, 1990, p. 10). The scarcity of this type of research, research that examines the very nature of a phenomenon, has led me to my research question: What is it like to be a first-year English language arts teacher? Drawing from the work of Stark (1991), who used a phenomenological lens through which to better understand the nature of the first year of teaching, I, too, hope that my "research leads me to create conditions that may re-form what *to begin* and *to be* a teacher means…" (p. 295).

Additionally, much of the literature addressing the developing identities of beginning teachers tends to ignore the affective and intellectual realms, that is, the teacher's temperament about her work and her thoughts on her growth and practice (Tickle, 1999), or her "convictions, investments, and desires" (Britzman, 1991, p. 115).

Instead, the literature tends to favor the more technical, or external, factors as worthy of educational attention, factors such as the effectiveness of teachers' preparation, beginning teachers' subject matter knowledge, their classroom methods, and their curriculum organization. In addition to focusing on the technical competency of first-year teachers in order to explore why they either "sink or swim," we need to broaden our conception of the teacher, as Hargreaves (1995) points out below:

> Understanding the emotional life of teachers, their feelings for and in their work, and attending to this emotional life in ways that positively cultivate it and avoid negatively damaging it should be absolutely central to teacher development efforts. (p. 21)

This broader conception of first-year teachers and of their evolving "teacher identities" will only begin to come into view when educational researchers make efforts to present first-year teachers' experiences as intersections of the affective, intellectual, and technical realms, as representative of both the internal and external development that a novice teacher experiences. As Stark (1991) points out, "if we ignore a teacher's being, how can we seek an understanding and construct meaning out of what the experience is like for that person?" (p. 296).

In turn, a better understanding of the phenomenon of the first year of teaching and recognition of the ways in which the culture of teaching subjugates novice teachers will provide classroom teachers, teacher educators, and researchers with the momentum to challenge our collective thinking and attitudes about beginning teachers. In altering our ways of thinking about first-year teachers, a change process that requires us to "think outside of the box," we can begin to identify more realistic criteria for success for beginning teachers so that we don't continue to hold novices to the same standards as veteran teachers (Howey & Zimpher, 1989).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RESEARCH RELEVANT TO THE EXPERIENCES OF FIRST-YEAR ENGLISH TEACHERS

Prevalent themes in educational research tend to come and go in cycles. There were periods in the 1970s, '80s, and '90s during which educational researchers focused on beginning teachers, as their focus was relevant to the growing interest in assisting beginning teachers in their transition from preparation to practice. In reading this research from decades past, it is interesting to note that the research on beginning teachers' transitions from preservice to inservice has ebbed and flowed throughout the past thirty years. We are currently in a period where research on beginning teachers is again a hot topic, due to the increasing importance of issues such as teacher retention, teacher "migration," teacher shortages, teacher induction programs, and student achievement. With our nation on the brink of an influx of 2.2 million new teachers within the coming decade, it makes sense that many educational researchers have returned their attention to the experiences of new teachers.

In the following three sections, I will discuss my own stance as a researcher relative to three major areas of beginning teacher research. The first area I review is what I have come to call the "deficit-based research" of beginning teachers' problems and concerns and beginning teachers' development. The second area, teacher socialization, helps to provide a lens through which we can view a beginning teacher's entrance into schools as a "two-way street," where teacher, students, and faculty are inevitably involved in personal and professional negotiations. Finally, the third area of

research, teacher identity, provides a framework for my phenomenological research method as well as for my data analysis in Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7.

The Problematic Nature of Deficit-Based Research

Not much has changed in the last 30 years regarding the problems and concerns of beginning teachers (Veenman, 1984; Ganser, 1999). Novice teachers tend to struggle with classroom management, with juggling the multiple tasks and responsibilities of a teacher, and with handling the "paper load" of teaching. Many of these unchanging problems can be attributed to the reality shock that new teachers experience upon facing the multifaceted work of a teacher for the first time. While preparation programs may address some of these issues, it is only upon immersing themselves in the work of teaching that these problems and concerns become real to the novice. It is safe to say that most first-year teachers can expect that they, too, will experience these problems and concerns as they are faced with the realities of classroom teaching for the first time.

I find the problems and concerns and teacher development research (Berliner, 1988; Burden, 1981; Feiman-Nemser, 1983; Fuller, 1969; Lortie, 1966; Sikes, 1985; Sprinthall & Thies-Sprinthall, 1983) important for framing the complexities of a beginning teacher's experience. But, much of the research portrays a one-sided look at the experiences of beginning teachers, through reductive categories (Fuller, 1969; Huberman, 1989; Veenman, 1984) or deficit-heavy descriptions of beginning teachers (Berliner, 1988; Clift, 1991). Lortie's (1966) image of the first-year teacher as Robinson Crusoe, stranded on a desert isle, persists as a controlling metaphor, with the struggle to survive at the center of the story.

I intend, with this study, to contribute a more balanced exploration of the first year of teaching, to "seek a broader view of teacher self-appraisal" Tickle (1999). I aim to present a more inclusive notion of beginning teacher development, an integration of the personal and professional, where the "personal growth, perspective, and identity can sit legitimately alongside subject knowledge, methods, and curriculum organization" (Tickle, 1999). Although there has been a rise of ethnographic studies (Vinz, 1995), interview studies (Britzman, 1993; Featherstone, 1993; Johnson, 2002, 2004; Knowles, 1994; Stark, 1989, 1991) and narrative accounts (Dollase, 1992; Ryan, 1980, 1992) of the first-year of teaching in the last twenty-five years, there is still a need for research that situates beginning teachers' experiences in "personal characteristics and life histories of the teachers or detailed information about the settings in which they work" (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985). This type of research helps to portray the landscape of the first year of teaching as one in which many forces, both inside and outside of the school, work in tandem to make the first-year teacher's transition into teaching personally and professionally challenging.

A common criticism of beginning teacher induction programs is that many programs do not address the contexts or dilemmas of individual new teachers but instead deal with new teachers as a "large batch" (Kardos et al., 2001, p. 251). This criticism stems from the fact that large, mandated induction programs tend to address new teachers' deficiencies by focusing instruction, through seminars, workshops, or orientation sessions, on what the research tells us are new teachers' primary areas of concern and difficulty. The body of research that informs these types of "large batch" induction programs includes inventories, or surveys, of beginning teachers' problems

and concerns and theoretical research on teacher development, too often solely based in psychological or adult development theory and not in primary research.

While I find value in these bodies of literature in that they provide a sense of the landscape of the first year of teaching, I find myself resisting the one-sided examination of the beginning years of teaching that this type of research has tended to produce. This research tends to be based on the seemingly generalizable development of and concerns of beginning teachers, regardless of teachers' context, personality, philosophy and biography. While a one-size-fits-all approach to supporting beginning teachers may help to keep the financial and personnel demands of induction programs in check, a one-size-fits-all approach to research on beginning teachers seems troublesome to me. I agree with Lightfoot (1983) that "narrowly constructed, one dimensional views of teachers found in the literature not only misrepresent teachers and their work but also lead to misdirected public policies" (p. 243).

Additionally, I respond problematically to research that subjugates the voices of beginning teachers by treating them as objects, not as subjects (Elbaz, 1991). The research on first-year teachers' problems and concerns tends to take inventory, predominantly through surveys, of new teachers' deficits in the hope that the deficits will someday be erased through better preparation or professional development. Likewise, much of the teacher development literature tends to regard the new teacher as object, caught unprepared in the whirlwind of developmental processes, unable to control the variables or the outcomes. And, as Berliner (1997) writes, "theories of teacher development seem to have reasonably good descriptive power—but they are inevitably wrong in describing the individual" (p. xi).

Finally, the broad scope of these studies, which are mostly based on large samples of beginning teachers and the generalizable nature of the findings, do not provide us with the stories of individual teachers, the local detail and context of a teacher's experience, or a better sense of why beginning teachers have such an overwhelmingly rough time during their first year. To better understand the nature of a first-year teacher's experience and the developmental process of becoming a teacher, we can first turn to studies on teacher socialization, research that offers more of a sociological perspective on a beginning teachers' entrance into school culture.

The Two-Way Street of Teacher Socialization

Within the scope of the first-year teacher's development lies the specific context of the individual teacher and her school, a landscape where one's "past, present, and future are set in dynamic tension" (Britzman, 1991, p. 8). The unique context of each first-year teacher's experience, and the many variables and influences within that context, can be considered through the lens of teacher socialization: the dialectical process involved in the give-and-take between the individual, the school, and the many variables that comprise school life (Schempp & Graber, 1992).

Understanding socialization as a dialectical process has not been the dominant view of teacher socialization research, however. Functionalist and interpretive approaches to studying teacher socialization (e.g. Lacey, 1977; Lortie, 1975) have adopted more narrow definitions of socialization, viewing it as an "overarching process whereby the individual engages in role learning that results in the situational adjustment (passive or active) of the individual to the culture of the profession" (Zeichner & Gore, 1990, p. 331). I have chosen to adopt a more critical definition of socialization

(Schempp & Graber, 1992), thereby rejecting the somewhat prevalent "one-way street" view of teacher socialization. Understanding teacher socialization as a dialectical process recognizes first-year teachers as active agents in their own socialization (Lawson, 1983; Schempp & Graber, 1992; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). It also recognizes the first-year teacher's inevitable affect on her school environment.

Beginning teachers experience socialization into teaching in three distinct contexts (Pollard, 1982). The first context, the interactive and social context in the classroom, involves the influence of students, who are often thought to be the predominant influence on the socialization of the first-year teacher (Blase & Greenfield, 1982). When a first-year teacher introduces herself to her students, a period of establishment begins. As the teacher tries to establish her authority and routines to stabilize the class, students inevitably "test" the teacher to see how far they can push her and how much she will bend. Such a working relationship is hence a "negotiated product" (Pollard, 1982, p. 23), and the first-year teacher and her students are bound to spend a considerable time "negotiating" before a working relationship is reached.

During this process of negotiation, the first-year teacher is relatively alone in her struggle to exercise authority, manage discipline, and establish routines and procedures. The isolation experienced by the first-year teacher is a major factor in the important role her students play during her socialization process. Lortie's (1975) early examination of the socialization processes of teachers hits the mark in describing the isolated nature of the first year.

> The beginning months of teaching...can be something of an ordeal...It is important to observe, however, that the ordeal is private—it is not an experience shared by a cadre of teachers...Its privateness reinforces the individualism we have already encountered (pp. 73-74).

Lortie's claim that the struggles of first-year teachers are endured alone reinforces a metaphor introduced by Willard Waller (1939), that of the teacher as rugged individualist. Waller categorized the American teacher ethic as one of the lonely, philanthropic scholar, idealistic in his ways and independent in his work. This notion of teacher as individualist still permeates the experiences of first-year teachers, as they often feel isolated in their struggles and abruptly cut off from the social support mechanisms that were in place during their preservice preparation. Considering the important relationships between first-year teachers and their students and the important socialization that goes on in the insulated space of the classroom brings the following questions to mind: What is it about the structure and culture of teaching that works to reinforce the isolation of beginning teachers? Consequently, what role do students play in shaping first-year teachers' understandings of themselves as teachers?

A second context in which first-year teachers experience their socialization into teaching is the institutional context. Within the institutional context, the socializing influence of colleagues on first-year teachers is a powerful force. Unfortunately, first-year teachers are often shocked by the treatment they may receive from some of their colleagues. Because new teachers are often viewed as posing a threat to the status quo (Sikes, 1985), they often feel pressured by veteran teachers to conform to school routines, beliefs, and practices. A first-year teacher's colleagues may help the newcomer make the transition into school culture in ways that preserve the veterans' own established interests, which is why the university preparation and ideals brought to schools by first-year teachers may hold little currency with their veteran colleagues (Schempp et al., 1993). Thus many first-year teachers quickly (and sadly) learn that

they need to suppress and devalue their professional education (Schempp et al., 1993), at least publicly, if they are to be welcomed into the school culture.

School cultures that are dominated by the concerns and habits of experienced teachers are identified as "veteran-oriented cultures" (Kardos et al., 2001, p. 261). As a consequence of veteran-oriented cultures in schools, first-year teachers come to feel that their ideas are not welcome within the status quo of the school, and they turn inward instead of outward and, in effect, learn to keep their mouths shut. This is an important example of the way in which many first-year teachers subscribe to the "society of the silent" (Schempp et al., 1993, p. 468). Those new teachers who choose to turn inward instead of outward often face disillusionment, which is exacerbated by their isolation, especially if like-minded colleagues are few and far between (Sikes, 1985).

However, when first-year teachers begin their teaching careers in schools with strong professional communities, that is, schools that support teacher learning and collaboration, their socialization into the institutional context looks very different. In schools with strong professional communities, teachers recognize their interdependence, share what they know, and have high standards for their work (Johnson & Birkeland, 2002). In weak professional communities, teachers are left to fend for themselves and often find themselves competing, not collaborating, with colleagues (Johnson & Birkeland, 2002). While the prospect of a strong professional community within the institutional context seems the ideal situation, especially for first-year teachers, the reality is that very few teachers experience this type of professional environment (Kardos et al., 2001).

It would seem that first-year teachers are caught in a catch-22 between isolation and collegiality. If they desire to reach out from their isolation in the classroom, they risk rejection by their more experienced colleagues. But, if they do not attempt to mingle with colleagues within the school, they subscribe by default to the longstanding belief that teaching is a "private endeavor" (Little, 1990, p. 530). So, many first-year teachers reach out to only a few select colleagues for support and assistance (Feiman-Nemser, 1983; Lortie, 1975). The first-year teacher intent on working and associating with her peers has a difficult road to travel in discovering that the "long-standing occupational and organizational traditions" in schools supply few precedents for collegiality or collaboration (Little, 1990, p. 530).

An additional complexity regarding the relationships between new teachers and their experienced colleagues is that the established teachers in a school tend to get the first choice of classes to teach. So, first-year teachers are likely to be assigned the classes and the students that veteran teachers do not want (Gold, 1996). Instead of being provided with a nurturing environment, first-year teachers are often "thrown to the wolves" in that they are given the most difficult assignments and are expected to display immediate competence despite the fact that "important aspects of learning to teach are associated with teaching experience over time" (Feiman-Nemser, 1983, p. 161).

The community and school cultures represent the third context in which first-year teachers experience their socialization into teaching. Within the community, the first-year teacher has to acquaint herself with the social context of her school: the socioeconomic status of the students, the values and beliefs of the community, and her

students' parents. For example, it is believed that schools serving high and low socioeconomic populations provide distinct working conditions for teachers (Zeichner & Gore, 1990) and that parental pressure is a "basic mechanism for the socialization of teachers into the traditions of a school community" (Zeichner & Gore, 1990, p. 340).

The framework I have adopted for examining the experiences of first-year English teachers in this dissertation is loosely based on Pollard's (1982) three levels of analysis. In Chapters 4, 5, & 6, I will examine new teachers' experiences in their first year of teaching in three distinct contexts: (1) the self, (2) the classroom, and, in a departure from Pollard's (1982) model, (3) the school as a workplace.

Crafting an Identity as a Teacher: First Year Teachers in Context

Case study and narrative research on first-year teachers tend to be grounded in small samples of participants and tend to favor depth over breadth. The rich case study and narrative literature on the first year of teaching has enabled me to study the experience of the first year of teaching through the perspectives and contextual experiences of individual teachers.

Beginning with Ryan's (1970) pioneering work, Don't Smile Until Christmas, research and literature using methodological frameworks of teacher narrative or case study have become increasingly popular in studying the experiences of first-year teachers. Listening to and collecting the stories of teachers is a relatively new approach to understanding teachers' knowledge, actions, beliefs, and biographies. Only in the past 30 years have narrative, biography, autobiography, and case study approaches become an acceptable form of qualitative, educational research (Bullough, 1989; Clift,

1991; Corcoran, 1981; Corley, 1998; Doecke, Brown, & Loughran, 2000; Dollase, 1992; Fox, 1993, 1995; Hargreaves & Jacka, 1995; Knowles, 1994; Ryan, 1970, 1980, 1992; Smagorinsky, Lakly, & Johnston, 2002).

Bullough's (1989) case study approach of the experience of one first-year teacher helped to lay the groundwork for more interpretive studies about the first year of teaching. Like Bullough (1989), I appreciate how the stories of individual teachers' experiences help to complicate and problematize our notions of what the first year is like. Although common factors and themes may emerge from narratives and case studies, we have to resist the notion of a "model" or "template" that fully describes and explains, and thus provides solutions for, the complexities of the first year of teaching.

Stories, or narratives, allow for the presentation of data that might be otherwise difficult to convey to a reader, such as a teacher's developing sense of self or identity. Such details that reside in the affective realm are not technical, observable traits, and thus tend to be absent from much of the research on teaching. Something that makes collecting narratives different from, say, collecting surveys, is that teachers' stories tend to move us beyond the technical issues of lesson plans and curriculum to include teachers' biographies as well. This results in the telling of stories that have more to do with images, purposes, feelings, reactions and personal meanings than with teaching method or curricular decision-making (Carter, 1993).

The six teachers' self-reported accounts of their first year experiences in Ryan's (1970) work helped to pave the way for later "teacher stories," windows into the complex and sometimes frenzied worlds of first-year teachers. These studies of the experiences of first-year teachers—narrative, case study, ethnographic,

phenomenological—have helped to "put a face" on our research-based images of the first-year teacher (e.g. Dollase, 1992; Hebert & Worthy, 2001; Ryan, 1980, 1992; Stark, 1989, 1991). That is, these types of descriptive studies aim to "capture and map out the lifespace of [teachers]…the experience of living a particular life during a particular year" (Ryan, 1980, p. 17). Ryan (1970) and Stark (1989, 1991), among others, relate their teacher participants' experiences in the first year to the construction of a teacher identity.

Teaching as Being Versus Teaching as Doing

Though the case studies and narrative studies on first-year teachers is robust and ever expanding, much of the research tends to focus on specific questions and concerns related to teachers' preservice preparation, teachers' induction experiences, and teachers' negotiation of school culture, curriculum and assessment, and accountability systems. In contrast, relatively few studies have focused on the "lifeworlds" (van Manen, 1984) of first-year teachers from a phenomenological perspective. In my review of recent research on first-year teachers, I found only one study that explored the experiences of first year teachers in secondary schools using a phenomenological methodology (Stark, 1989, 1991). Stark's dissertation study (1989, 1991) focuses on two secondary teachers' first-year experiences, a social studies teacher and a home economics teacher.

Stark's (1989, 1991) phenomenological study has particular relevance to my study of first-year English teachers, as we have both gone beyond an analysis of the technical aspects and challenges of the first year of teaching to reveal the internal

tensions and complexities of novices' "coming of age" as teachers. Also, Stark's (1989, 1991) work delves into the complexities of developing a teacher identity, of coming to understand the role/s of a teacher, and of crafting a public persona as a teacher. Stark (1989, 1991) found that while one of her first-year teacher participants was able to eventually see teaching as a mode of being-in-the-world and not simply as an act of doing, the other teacher was not able to make this leap. Subsequently, the teacher who was not able to move beyond teaching as a technical act was also not able to see the importance of pedagogic caring in her teaching (van Manen, 1990). This finding leads Stark (1991) to ask: "What happens...if we do not view teaching as a way of being-in-the-world? How do teacher educators encourage...teachers to experience teaching as *being* as opposed to teaching as *doing*?" (p. 307). Stark's concept of teaching "as a way of being in the world" is connected to the way in which many of my teacher participants were able to see teaching as an integral part of their identities, what I am calling a "teacher identity."

Negotiating Ideals and Expectations as a Teacher

The theme of a "teaching identity" is frequently discussed in the case study and narrative research on beginning teachers (e.g. Britzman, 1991; Bullough, 1989; Ryan, 1980). This theme is also evident in research on beginning teachers of English (Smagorinsky et al., 2002; Vinz, 1995); it is a central concern as beginning teachers' ideas of themselves as teachers come up against the steadfast realities of school culture and the "culture of teachers" (Britzman, 1991). While most beginning teachers enter their first assignments full of idealism and possibility (Gless & Moir, n.d.), they often encounter a conservative school culture that is contrary to their ideals (Lortie, 1975).

Within this tension, first-year teachers struggle to carve out a vision of themselves as teachers that does not compromise too many of their ideals but also conforms, to a certain extent, to the culture they have chosen to enter.

Vinz's (1995) ethnographic study of four first-year English teachers presents a record of the developing habits of mind of teachers as they participate in a self-designed inquiry and support group throughout their first year. A major tension in these four English teachers' experiences involved crafting their "teaching identities," the most compelling category in Vinz's (1995) findings. The four participants often found, in the early part of their first year, that they had to "negotiate multiple and sometimes conflicting demands during their daily interactions" (p. 165). All four teachers spoke of their continuing struggle to connect what they were doing in their classrooms to what they hoped to do. This tension cited by these four beginning English teachers reverberates in the larger realm of first-year teachers; it is often discussed as a tension between the realism of schools and the idealism of the beginning teacher (Johnson & Birkeland, 2002). Or, as Vinz (1995) puts it, the first-year teachers in her study experienced the "incongruence between the actual and the possible" (p. 171).

Smagorinsky, Lakly, and Johnson (2002) also discuss the issue of teacher identity in their examination of one English teacher's experience through her final year of preservice preparation and during her first year of teaching. Through interviews, observations, and document analysis, these English education researchers examine the tensions their participant experienced when making the transition from her teacher education program to her first teaching job. What they found is that, ultimately, this first-year English teacher was frustrated by the overwhelming authority of the

prescribed curriculum; she was unhappy with the "person who was teaching her classes, feeling distant from the teacher she had become and fearful of the teacher she might become" (p. 210). She was also unhappy in finding herself accommodating her beliefs about good teaching to the requirements of the curriculum; in fact, Smagorinsky et al. (2002) describe Andrea as being "worn down by the weight of the curriculum" (p. 202).

Despite her frustrations, though, Andrea eventually learned, from her more experienced colleagues, ways to resist some of the curricular mandates that constrained her efforts to teach. Her resistance, though, was practiced quietly, since, as a first-year teacher, she did not have the social or professional capital to overtly resist the curriculum mandates. Smagorinsky et al. (2002) explain that Andrea created a "hybrid classroom" that reflected neither the teacher she wanted to be (and the way she wanted to teach) nor the constricting curriculum mandated by the district (p. 208). Thus, with her "hybrid classroom," Andrea was also crafting a "hybrid teacher identity." This participant's difficulty with prescribed, mandated curriculum illustrates one dimension of the beginning teacher's experience: negotiating a teaching identity within or beyond the constraints of the curriculum.

As beginning teachers experiment with their teaching identities, and as they face the inevitable realism-versus-idealism dichotomy, they are bound to create hybrid classrooms that partially reflect their visions of both of the real and the ideal. This straddling of the fence, so to speak, in the first year of teaching is not uncommon. Because how teachers teach is in direct dialogue with who they are, many beginning teachers find themselves simultaneously working on two projects: struggling to change who they are in the context of what they do (Featherstone, 1993).

This theme of crafting one's teacher identity is compelling to me because it resonates with the first-year teaching experiences of the two participants in my pilot study as well as with the experiences of the first-year teacher participants in this study. Ultimately, I also believe that this theme captures a negotiation process that is universal—the processes of becoming, maturing, and crafting a public identity and persona.

In his 1980 collection of first-year teachers' accounts of their first-year experiences, Ryan quotes the British anthropologist Ashley Montagu to emphasize the cultural and personal significance of crafting an identity: "The largest personal sorrow suffered of human beings consists of the difference of what one was capable of becoming and what one has, in fact, become" (Ryan, 1980, p. 3). Consistent with the quote from Montagu, within the literature on beginning teachers there are too many accounts of beginning teachers' disappointment in failing to realize their ideal image of themselves as teachers. The fact that new teachers often enter their first teaching jobs with an idealism that is later worn down by the realities of school culture is troublesome to me. Why are beginning teachers' identities so often compromised by the culture of teaching? How will we keep new teachers teaching if the cultural status quo in our schools consistently works to dampen the idealism of our newest teachers? Attending to the issue of a developing teacher identity and nurturing the development of new teachers' identities are, I believe, central to ensuring the retention and good practice of our newest teachers.

First-Year Teachers' Conceptions of English Language Arts

Consistent with Lortie's (1975) claim that one's "apprenticeship of observation" greatly influences one's conception of teaching and learning, researchers in the teaching of English have found that English teachers' experiences as students indeed influence the kinds of English teachers they become (Fox, 1993; Grossman, 1990, 1991; Ritchie & Wilson, 1995).

Ritchie and Wilson (1993), in their study of preservice English teachers, found that students' past experiences in traditional English classrooms influenced those students' conceptions of an English teacher's role and identity. In their interviews with 25 prospective English teachers, Ritchie and Wilson (1995) discovered that many of their participants had spent their middle and high school years in classrooms where conservative teaching methods prevailed. These preservice teachers' experiences in English classrooms, defined primarily as "grammar drills, vocabulary study, taking notes, and answering the questions at the end of stories" (Ritchie & Wilson, 1995, p. 71), greatly affected their conceptions of English and of English teachers.

In contrast, preservice teachers who spent part of their middle and high school years in transformative English classrooms, those in which, for example, reader-response approaches to teaching literature and the writing process approach to teaching writing were promoted, held very different conceptions of teaching English. These preservice English teachers spoke of the "teacher as guide" (Ritchie & Wilson, 1995, p. 75), as someone who gives ownership and creates possibilities for students, as someone who is engaged in reading, writing, and learning. In comparing the effects of these two types of English classrooms on prospective English teachers, Ritchie & Wilson (1995)

conclude, "students' apprenticeships in these writing and reading workshops and classes seemed to hold at least the promise of an expanded vision of what their goals might be in teaching" (p. 75).

As individuals move from teacher preparation to their first year of practice in an English language arts classroom, they continue to try to make sense of the intersection of their "apprenticeship of observation," their preservice preparation, and their own classroom practice. Grossman's (1990) study of six beginning English teachers—three of whom were graduates of teacher preparation programs and three who were not—reveals the strengths of effective English teacher preparation programs in helping first-year teachers conceptualize and develop English curricula and teaching methods.

Grossman (1990) found, through semi-structures interviews with first-year teacher participants, that two of the teachers without formal preparation taught English primarily from a transmission model, as they were not able to put aside their content knowledge in favor of pedagogical content knowledge (Grossman, 1990). Not surprisingly, these same teachers tended to select more canonical texts for their curricula and tended to plan their courses with the "elite" group of students in mind.

In contrast, Grossman (1990) found that the three first-year teachers who had undergone formal English teacher preparation had a greater sense of instructional scaffolding, student ownership of knowledge, and methods of connecting English content with students' lives. Combining their subject matter knowledge with their knowledge of pedagogy, these formally prepared teachers were more cognizant of the differences between "teaching English" and "teaching students."

Clift (1991) presents a case study of one English teacher's experiences through her last year of teacher education and her first year of teaching English. Clift (1991) examines her participants' stories through a pedagogical lens, highlighting the struggles that this teacher experienced in developing her pedagogical content knowledge in English language arts. This study shows the difficulty that a first-year English teacher faces in trying to adapt her subject matter knowledge to ways of teaching that engage students, a phenomena that Clift (1991) names "pedagogical problem solving" (365). Similarly, Smagorinksy et al. (2002) found that their first-year English participant struggled with implementing her school's mandated English curriculum while retaining her own vision of teaching and learning in the English classroom. In both studies, novice English teachers grappled with their curriculum and pedagogy where the rubber hit the road, so to speak, where their preservice experience and ideals came up against the realities of the classroom.

Finally, Fox (1993, 1995) presents case studies of two, first-year English language arts teachers and seeks to understand how their definitions of English are related to their approaches to the teaching of English. Fox (1993, 1995) found that both teachers' conceptions of English were formed through their experiences as students and, more importantly, through their teacher preparation program. These findings lead Fox (1993, 1995) to conclude, consistent with Grossman's (1990) study, that effective English teacher preparation programs "give voice" to their prospective teachers by allowing them to formulate and articulate personal theories of teaching English. Fox (1995) calls for English teacher preparation programs to provide opportunities for preservice teachers to "identify and examine the beliefs they have about the content

they teach" (p. 23) in an effort to help preservice teachers imagine the kind of English teachers they want to become.

Consistent with the rite of passage metaphor I used in Chapter 1, I believe that one's developing sense of personal and professional self is crucial to one's smooth or rocky transition into a professional culture and career. Similarly, beginning teachers' developing notions of English language arts and pedagogy seems to be inextricably woven into the fabric of their teaching identities. I am interested in further exploring this notion in my study: how first-year teachers' biographies and apprenticeships of observation, among other factors, have influenced their sense of themselves—their identities—as teachers of English.

Building on Previous Research

While the research on first-year teachers' problems and concerns, development, and socialization provides us with important frameworks for understanding the experiences of beginning teachers, it tends to be grounded in theory and, in some cases, in the generalizable nature of the data. As a result of this particular type of predictive research, many state-mandated induction programs are narrowly focused on addressing these oft-cited problems and concerns.

What is missing from many beginning teacher support programs, however, is attention to the subjective, the particular, the local context of first-year teachers' work. Appreciation of the importance of a first-year teacher's local experience will be an added component of teacher support programs only if we are able to effectively balance

the aforementioned predictive types of research with research that conveys the complexities and the richness of the experiences of first-year teachers.

It is my hope to contribute to this latter type of research on first-year teachers by exploring the lifeworlds (van Manen, 1984) of first-year English teachers through a phenomenological lens and through honoring the narrative as a way of knowing and learning. In documenting the narratives of first-year English teachers' experiences and the meaning they make of those experiences, I hope to help my readers make sense of my participants' experiences in their first year of teaching English. As Jerome Bruner (1986) writes, the human race has two approaches to making sense: analysis and logic on the one hand and narrative on another. Stories, or narratives, often contain our best wisdom in "its most complex yet accessible form" (Featherstone, 1993, p. 95).

We have thoroughly established, through various forms of research, that the first year of teaching is difficult for most people, for a variety of personal and professional reasons. But, in returning to points that I raised in Chapter 1, I am interested in better understanding what it is about the essence of the first year that makes it so difficult. And, I am interested in better understanding these essences from the perspectives of first-year English teachers. If indeed the first year of teaching is a professional rite of passage, what does it take to successfully navigate that passage? And, how are first-year English teachers able to teach effectively, despite the odds that seem to be against them?

By utilizing in-depth interviews and a phenomenological framework, my aim in this dissertation study was to come to a deeper understanding of the nature and meaning of first-year English teachers' everyday experiences. Similar to the work of Stark

(1991), I am interested in the meaning first-year teachers make of their experience and phenomenological, in-depth interviewing seems to me the best way to gain access to the meaning teachers make. I will explain my methodology and research process in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to explore the nature of the experiences of first-year English language arts teachers using in-depth interviews from a phenomenological perspective (Seidman, 1998). The significance of this study is threefold. First, although there is a wealth of research on beginning teachers spanning the last three decades, few studies have explored the experiences of first-year teachers using the lens of phenomenology. In a departure from much of the research on first-year teachers, I do not intend to discover or unlock an effective theory with which I can explain the experience of the first-year teacher. Rather, I use phenomenology as my theoretical lens in order to unlock the "possibility of plausible insight which brings us in more direct contact with the world" (van Manen, 1984, p. 38). That is, by studying the lifeworlds of first-year English teachers, phenomenology will allow me to gain an awareness of the "seemingly trivial dimensions of...everyday educational lives" in order to make evident the "consequential in the inconsequential, the significant in the taken-for-granted" (van Manen, 1984, p. 36).

Secondly, I am focusing my study on first-year middle and high school English teachers, a subject-specific slice of first-year teacher research. Though there have been studies that have focused on the development of first-year English teachers' curricular and pedagogical knowledge (Clift, 1991; Fox, 1995; Grossman, 1990; Smagorinsky et al., 2002), very few studies have focused on the multifaceted and complex experiences of English teachers during their first year of teaching and from their perspectives (Featherstone, 1993; Vinz, 1995).

Third, the significance of this study extends outward to state and district induction programs and mandates. It is clear to me that too many beginning teacher support and induction programs are short-term programs that treat all beginning teachers the same. I see this effect partly due to the vast research on beginning teachers that attempts to neatly summarize and categorize the needs of first-year teachers. Many induction programs are sure to have, at least on paper, instruction in classroom management issues, the number one problem for most beginning teachers. Conversely, I wonder if many induction programs address a single teacher's struggle to find like-minded colleagues whom she can trust and from whom she can collaboratively learn to improve her craft.

This one-size-fits-all mentality in designing and implementing new teacher support does little for the new teacher who doesn't "fit the profile" or for the new teacher whose main concerns are not the usual suspects of management, student motivation, and the like. I believe that through presenting first-year teachers' experiences and through exploring the nature of those experiences, stakeholders in the support and retention of beginning teachers might begin to see the complexity of each teacher's experience. Likewise, our visions of induction programs might change in order to accommodate the vast differences from teacher to teacher, school to school, and district to district.

Personal Perspective

According to Patton (1990) and Douglass and Moustakas (1984), the first step in phenomenological analysis is that of Epoche, during which the researcher looks inside

herself to become aware of bias and personal involvement with the topic of the research. During this initial phase of my research study, I find it important to reflect on and articulate how I came to research the experiences first-year English teachers, my personal connection to the topic of first-year English teachers, and other stances that might influence my research process. I look to articulate these personal perspectives not to eliminate my preconceptions or biases but to reveal them to the reader. As Judi Marshall (1981) writes, "My bias is something I appreciate, it's part of me as a researcher. And while it is important for me and for others to recognize my bias, it really is what I can give as a researcher, it is my contribution..."(p. 399).

I will begin fleshing out my personal perspectives related to this research study by describing how I came to my chosen topic of exploring the experiences of first-year English teachers. Three years ago, in September 2001, my colleague and I organized and facilitated a first-year teacher inquiry and support group. Although that venture was not part of my research, it impacted me in many ways, one of which was to introduce me to the complex experiences of first-year teachers. More importantly, the work I have done with my colleague and the experience of the inquiry and support group reminded me that the realm of beginning teachers is an exciting, complex topic, and one that I could seriously pursue as the focus of my research. I abandoned my earlier topic of teachers' failure and chose a more hopeful and hope filled topic—the development of first-year English teachers. So, that is how I came to this topic.

Completing a pilot study on two, first-year English language arts teachers, in partial fulfillment of my doctoral program requirements, has also helped me to determine the direction of my dissertation research. It has also helped me to solidify my

commitment to working with beginning teachers. Interviewing two first-year English teachers for my pilot study at the same time I was working with other first-year teachers in a support and inquiry group proved to be a serendipitous combination. Not only was I thoroughly enjoying my work, but also I felt and believed that the work I was doing was beneficial to me and to the teachers.

Through my experiences with the support group and with phenomenological, in-depth interviewing, I have come to realize the value of providing a forum for first-year teachers to articulate and reflect on their experiences in their classrooms. I also have come to realize the importance of inviting first-year teachers into a professional "conversation" about teaching, learning, and schooling, thereby breaking some of the isolation and inadequacy that usually accompanies the first-year experience. In my participants' stories, I know I will find valuable insights into the complexities of teaching English language arts, into the "roller coaster" (Ryan, 1992) experience of the first year of teaching, and into the "rites of passage" that mark the novice's journey from student to teacher.

Additionally, through the reading I have done in phenomenology, I have come to internalize the significance of listening to the experience of everyday individuals. I have also come to respect the attention and thoughtfulness that is shared by the interviewer and the participant in phenomenological interviewing. In-depth interviewing also allows my participants, who are sometimes frenzied, tired, and overburdened, to take a "step back" from their everyday realities to talk about their experiences and the meaning they make of those experiences. I believe that this methodology best suits my research question and that the method also allows me to

explore the possibilities of narrative, or storytelling, as a way of knowing and making meaning.

I also come to this research study having had the experience of being a first-year English teacher in an urban high school. I taught high school English for five years before entering my doctoral program, and I vividly recall my first year as one of many struggles and frustrations. Though I had completed what I believe to be a very good teacher preparation program, I was not prepared for the challenges that a large, urban high school offered, nor was I prepared for the autonomy and eventual isolation that I experienced as a very young, beginning English teacher in an English department of very experienced and jaded colleagues.

Although I returned to the same school for my second and third year of teaching, I struggled throughout my first year. I was a newly licensed teacher, newly married, had landed my first salaried job, and faced multiethnic and multilingual students with whom I had not had much experience. I was overwhelmed by life and by teaching. Not surprisingly, I believe I am entering this research study of first-year English teachers with a bias that reflects the difficult reality I faced in my first year. I heard many of my participants tell similar stories of frustration, disappointment, and disillusionment during their first year.

But, I also enter this research study with a desire to contribute to the literature hopeful narratives of first-year English teachers. If I concentrate on recalling my own experiences, I am able to reflect on several occasions when my ideals finally meshed with the reality of school or when my students surprised and impressed me with their cooperation and collaboration. First-year teachers have positive stories to tell, I am sure

of it. I have worked hard in my research process to not let my own negative experiences overshadow my participants' stories; likewise, I have also been cognizant of assuring a balance in the stories I report, being careful not to overcompensate for my own "bad news" by reporting only the "good news."

Phenomenological, In-Depth Interviewing

> Why then should one adopt one research approach over another? The choice should reflect more than mere whim, preference, taste, or fashion. Rather, the method one chooses ought to maintain a certain harmony with the deep interest that makes one an educator (a parent or teacher) in the first place. (van Manen, 1990, p. 2)

I am using in-depth interviewing from a phenomenological perspective as my methodology for this study (Seidman, 1998). In-depth interviewing allows me to explore my interests in hearing teachers' stories and in coming to better understand "the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (Seidman, 1998, p. 4). My connection to stories as a way of knowing runs throughout my own experience and history. I was raised in a story-telling family; my father, mother, three siblings, and numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins, keep the family truths and mythologies alive by telling stories that have been and continue to be passed down like heirlooms. I have come to know my parents through the stories they tell inasmuch as I have come to know them through their actions and their being. Being thus connected to the power and meaningfulness of stories in my own life, I understand that "it is a privilege to gather the stories of people through interviewing and to come to understand their experience through their stories" (Seidman, 1998, p. xxi).

A phenomenological approach to in-depth interviewing allows me not only to have the privilege of listening to teachers' stories but also to explore, with them, the nature, or essence, of their lived experience as first-year English teachers. This co-exploration of teachers' lived experience and the meaning they make of that experience involves a researcher-participant dynamic that I respect and in which I feel comfortable, for the most part. The sensitivity, intentional listening, and dialectic involved in a phenomenological interview, as well as the "jointly produced discourses" (Mishler, 1986), have not only been a good match for my research question, but have been a good match for my researcher self.

Mishler's (1986) concept of a "jointly produced discourse" is relevant to this study because my participants and I, throughout the interview and interpretive processes, jointly produced the content of the interviews, the direction of the interviews, and the meaning of the interviews. Although the stories of teaching through Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 will be presented in the words of my participants, I have selected, crafted and edited those words in order to tell my own story, one of developing identities, personas, professionalism, craft knowledge during the first year of teaching.

Additionally, I am attracted to the challenging and creative nature of transforming teachers' lived experiences into a "textual expression of its essence" (van Manen, 1990, p. 36). Through crafting a reflexive re-living of teachers' experiences, I hope my readers, both researchers and practitioners, are able to animate, or re-live, their own experiences as teachers and learners. In a conscious effort to seek out a research methodology that maintains a certain harmony with my beliefs as an educator and as a person of the world, I am attracted to the care, respect and "bottom-up" approach that a

phenomenological methodology brings to my research question: What is it like to be a first-year English teacher?

In wanting to convey the authentic voices of first-year teachers, however, it is important that I carefully balance the power dynamics of my own research. Mishler (1986) writes about the transfer of power in a research study when interview participants are encouraged to "speak in their own 'voices' "(p. 118). Similarly, Paget (1983) writes about her interview research with women artists and discusses how she needed to learn to appreciate "that the answers given continually inform the evolving conversation" (p. 67). Massarik (1981) also writes of the give-and-take between researcher and participant in an interview, as the method "recognizes the inherent humanness of both participants, and indeed the genuine relevance of the total interpersonal...environment within which the process occurs" (p. 204). Carefully balancing the power structure of my interactions and relationships with my participants is a methodological imperative if I hope to ultimately affect, for the better, the ways that first-year teachers are attended to, treated, and considered.

I interviewed each of my ten participants three times, with each interview lasting 90 minutes. This three-interview structure (Seidman, 1998) is semi-structured in that each of the three interviews has a focus or theme. The first interview is a life history, "How did you come to be an English teacher? Tell me about your life up until you became an English teacher this year." The second interview works to situate both the participant and me in the individual experience in context, "What is it like to be a first year English teacher? What are the details of your life as an English teacher?" The third interview is one in which the participant, having reconstructed her life history and

experiences as a teacher, works to make meaning of her experience as an English teacher, "Given what you have said in the first two interviews, what does it mean to be a first-year English teacher?"

Interviewing Technique

Upon completion of my pilot study, I reflected not only on my research process but also on my developing skills as an interviewer. After poring over the transcripts from my interviews with two, first-year English teachers, I wondered if I prompted them to delve deeply enough into the meaning of their experience. Van Manen (1990) states, "...the deeper goal, which is always the thrust of phenomenological research, remains oriented to asking the question of what is the nature of this phenomenon as an essentially human experience" (p. 62).

Having read van Manen after I had completed the pilot study, I was left to ask myself if I could have done more as an interviewer to capture the essence of my participants' experiences in their first four months of teaching English. That is: Could my follow-up questions have been more thoughtful? Could I have been a better listener? Were my questions too timid, and could they have delved deeper into the essence of each participant's experience? In the three interview structure, the third interview is often the most difficult as people are rarely asked, in their day-to-day lives, to make meaning of their experiences. In some ways I think that the third interview, or the meaning-making interview, is more difficult for younger interviewees because they have had less experience with and less reason for, perhaps, looking back on and making meaning of their lived experience. Also, the third interview was difficult for many

participants, especially those whose interviews were spread out over several weeks, because I was not able to provide my participants with transcripts during our interview process. I was not able to transcribe interviews one and two and provide those transcripts to my participants in preparation for interview 3. So, I spent more time preparing for the third interviews with my participants, reviewing my notes from the first two interviews and developing some back-up and "reminder" questions and prompts to help when my participants seem stumped by the meaning-making process or when they had trouble remembering something they had said in a previous interview.

In reflecting on my research process, I also pondered the following question: How are the power dynamics between my participants and me affecting the interviewing process? How are our role identities (doctoral student, educational researcher, classroom English teacher) affecting the interviewing process? Are my participants merely telling me what I want to hear? When I read Mishler's (1986) discussion of an interview as "a joint production" (p. 82), I became conscious of the fact that the participants and I co-constructed the stories of their first year as English teachers. I would argue that we also jointly made meaning of those co-constructed stories. My presence as an interviewer and researcher makes me a co-participant in the discourse that is generated during the interview; my mode of questioning and my encouragement or facilitation during the interview, as well as the cultural and research context of the interview, all affect the "story's production" (Mishler, 1986, p. 105).

It is inevitable that, as the interviewer and researcher, I directly affected the outcome of the interview. Therefore, it is important that I am conscious of the ways in which I informed and affected the interview (the interview location, the way I ask

questions, my body language and stance, how much I share of my own experience during the interview, etc.). Also important is that I am conscious of the authority I bring to the interview as a representative of the educational research community. I used care to not take this authority lightly and, above all, to keep the dignity and protection of my participants as my primary directive.

Making Contact

The network that I utilized to make contact with my participants has been built over a period of eleven years, the time that I have resided in Western Massachusetts. During these eleven years, I completed a two-year Masters degree and teacher licensure program, taught in the public school for five years, and enrolled full-time, for five years to date, in doctoral program in teacher education. From these various contexts, I have developed collegial bonds with classroom teachers, teacher educators from various institutions, administrators, and perhaps most importantly, the students I have worked with in a teacher education program. I used these resources to seek out seven of the participants for this study. Additionally, I solicited help from my family in Northern New York and from a colleague in the SUNY system in making contact with three participants who teach in New York State.

Four of my participants, Sarah, Valerie, Rebecca, and Meredith, were people with whom I had developed relationships prior to entering this research study. Three of them had been my students, and one of them is the daughter of an acquaintance of mine. My prior relationships with these four participants no doubt complicated the interview (Seidman, 1998). But, I also consider Sarah, Valerie and Meredith to be three of my

most compelling and engaged participants, so in that sense, I do not think our relationships impeded the quality of the interview. Rebecca, however, seemed somewhat reserved throughout our interview process, and I read her instincts to hold back a bit as reflective of her discomfort with our prior teacher/student relationship, a relationship which was further complicated by our closeness in age and life experience. An excerpt from my research journal illustrates my mixed feelings about my initial interview with Rebecca:

> Yesterday, I had my first interview with Rebecca. My first reaction to the interview was that it was a bit awkward…I felt that, as honest and forthright as Rebecca is, she held back to some extent. I also think that, despite our history together, she's still "feeling me out," so to speak…I was walking the line between formal researcher and informal, interested teacher educator and peer yesterday, and I'm not sure that I was successful. Of all the participants I've interviewed and with whom I've had prior relationships, Rebecca is the most intimidating and challenging…(June 5, 2003).

Six of my participants, though, were complete strangers to me, and so making contact with each of them was a careful process. Since I had been referred to these six participants—Andrew, Ian, Cathy, Tori, Barbara, and Maria—through other people, I had to take care to invite them to participate in this study on their own terms. I had to free up my schedule to be able to interview them when and where they wanted. And, I had to take special care in making them feel comfortable talking to a stranger about their life histories and teaching experiences.

In reflecting on my interview experiences with these six participants, I can state with confidence that my interviews with Andrew, Cathy, and Tori were by far the most successful. My interviews with them elicited many of the excerpts that appear in this study. They talked a lot, were open and honest with me, and were serious in their

analysis of their first year experiences as teachers. The following excerpt from my research journal helps illustrate how Andrew, a complete stranger before the interview process, set the standard for the quality of interviews I was expecting.

> Just finished the third interview with Andrew, and by all accounts, he is personally responsible for motivating me to write my dissertation. A real diamond in the rough...By the end [of our interviews], I felt a kinship with him as I have with no other participant...Maybe it speaks to his thoughtfulness and introspection or maybe my immediate connection with his life history...Whatever the reason, the connection I felt with Andrew made our interviews easy, that is, he spoke to me with ease and I responded with ease...A stranger to me prior to Thursday, May 29, I know feel as if I truly know this otherwise random person on the planet...(May 31, 2003).

Though it was easier to gain access to the participants with whom I had prior relationships, my interviews with those participants I did not know prior to this study were, for the most part, more comfortable. The complexities involved in prior relationships with participants, especially the teacher/student dynamic, are invisible but most definitely affect the interview process. It is harder to delve more deeply into a personal issue with a former student than with a complete stranger. It is also harder to not let your previous mental image of the participant "leak" into the research process.

Participant Selection

Through "purposeful sampling" (Patton, 1990, p. 169), I was able to find ten, first-year English teacher participants for this study. I interviewed two male and eight female first-year English teachers at the middle school and high school levels. Purposeful sampling requires the researcher to establish guidelines for selecting participants that are congruent with the purpose of the research. For this study, I used Patton's (1990) strategy of "maximum variation sampling" as my guideline in selecting

my participants. The logic behind maximum variation sampling is that "any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared aspects or impacts" of the phenomenon under study (Patton, 1990, p. 172).

Maximum variation sampling aims to gather a wide variety of participants within the scope of the study (first-year English teachers), and I focused my efforts for participant selection on a "small sample of great diversity" (Patton, 1990, p. 172). Patton (1990) explains that, when selecting a small sample of great diversity, emerging from the data collection and analysis will be detailed descriptions of each case, which are useful for showing uniqueness, and important shared patterns that cut across cases. The aim and likely outcomes of maximum variation sampling seem to me to be congruent with a phenomenological study; that is, not only will I be describing individual teacher's stories of their first year of teaching, but also I will be looking for connections that bridge teachers' experiences during their first year.

Though I set out to identify a participant sample that would reflect "great diversity," I encountered many dead ends and some frustration in my search for willing, first-year teacher participants. Eventually, I was able to make contact with ten participants who agreed to the rigorous time commitment that participation in this study involved. Table 1 below represents the gender, racial, and school profiles of my ten participants.

My sample size for this study was based on several considerations. First, I wanted a sample of first-year teachers that represented various pathways to teaching.

Table 1. First-year teacher participants

Name	Gender	Age	Location	School	Teacher preparation	Ethnicity
Tori	F	24	Eastern MA	Urban high school	Graduate, M.Ed.	Chinese-American
Barbara	F	43	Western MA	Suburban high school	BA English, no teacher preparation	White
Cathy	F	25	Central NY	Suburban middle school	Graduate, M.S. in Education	White
Maria	F	23	Eastern MA	Urban high school	Undergrad, B.A. English	White
Valerie	F	23	Eastern MA	Urban high school	Undergrad, B.A. English	White
Andrew	M	25	Northern NY	Suburban high school	Graduate	White
Sarah	F	27	Eastern MA	Urban middle school	Graduate, M.Ed.	Jewish
Meredith	F	28	Central MA	Suburban high school	B.A. English, no teacher preparation	White
Rebecca	F	29	Western MA	Rural technical high school	Graduate, M.Ed.	White
Ian	M	50	Southern NY	Suburban high school	Graduate, M.A.T	White

That is, I sought participants who entered teaching through traditional routes (teacher preparation programs) and through non-traditional routes (alternative certification

and/or no teacher preparation). Eight of my participants successfully completed either undergraduate or graduate teacher preparation programs, and two of my participants did not complete teacher preparation programs, though both had Bachelor's degrees in English. Additionally, I wanted to interview first-year teachers for whom teaching was their first career as well as those who had come to teaching as a second or third career. This sampling criteria allowed me a range of ages in my participant sample. Eight of the teachers I interviewed were in their early to late twenties, and two of the teachers I interviewed were in their late forties to early fifties, having entered teaching later in life.

I sought out participants who were both male (2) and female (8), and I searched for teacher participants from different ethnic minority groups, though I was only able to make contact with one, Tori, who is Chinese-American. Eight of the other teachers in my study are White, and one participant identified herself as Jewish. The lack of ethnic minorities in my sample represents the small percentage of teachers of color who choose to pursue a career in teaching. According to the National Education Association's "Status of the American Public School Teacher 2000-2001" study, 90% of teachers surveyed in their nationally representative sample of 1,467 teachers were White, about 5% were African-American, and the remaining 5% were other races (NEA, 2003). The lack of ethnic minorities in this study also represents, the demographics of the geographic region from which I was able to cull participants. Though there are no doubt large ethnic minority populations in Massachusetts and New York, the geographic sites of my inquiry, the communities from which the majority of my participants come from, are largely White and suburban. Finally, I purposely sought participants who taught in a range of contexts at both the middle and high school levels.

Eight teachers in this study teach high school English and two teach at the middle school level. Five participants taught in suburban schools, four taught in urban schools, and one taught at a rural school.

During the four months I spent interviewing my teacher participants, I was also, simultaneously, making contact with new potential participants in an ongoing effort to expand my sample size. In the final month of my interviewing and data collection, I had successfully made contact with ten willing participants and, during my processes of reviewing interview notes and tapes, I was able to conclude that these ten participants represented a broad enough sample for my inquiry. As Patton (1990) points out, "Sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what's at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with time and resources" (p. 184). As my interviewing was winding down, I was beginning to notice redundancies in the teachers' experiences and stories. This led me to believe that I had a deep and broad enough sample from which to portray the complexities and nuances of the experience of the first year of teaching English language arts.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) use "redundancy" as a benchmark for determining when a sample selection is adequate for the particular inquiry a researcher is investigating:

> In purposeful sampling the size of the sample is determined by informational considerations. If the purpose is to maximize information, the sampling is terminated when no new information is forthcoming from new sampled units; thus redundancy is the primary consideration (p. 202).

My instincts regarding redundancy were further validated when, upon reviewing the verbatim transcripts from all ten participants, I found parallel stories and experiences in the teachers' narratives. These parallels were indicators that I had selected a

representative, purposeful sample from which I could "document unique or diverse variations that have emerged" in first-year teachers' experiences and identify "important common patterns that cut across variations" (Patton, 1990, p. 182).

Making Sense of the Interviews

> One final dimension differentiates a phenomenological approach: the assumption that there is an essence or essences to shared experience...The experiences of different people are bracketed, analyzed, and compared to identify the essences of the phenomenon...(Patton, 1990, p. 70).

After completing my interviews with participants, I transcribed, verbatim, 15 of the 30 interviews, and I hired an outside consultant to transcribe the other 15 interviews. Though I was initially skeptical about hiring a transcriber, I hired her because it expedited my research process, which allowed me to stay on track with my timeline, a research timeline designed with various external time constraints in mind. However, I was able to transcribe 15 of my participants' interviews myself, which proved to be a valuable process. First, it reunited me with the participants' voices and stories. Second, transcribing was my first mode of analysis; that is, as I was transcribing the interview tapes, I started to hear interesting passages or themes developing across participants' experiences. Thirdly, transcribing reconnected me with my own interviewing strengths and weaknesses and allowed me to reflect upon my questions, reactions, and words as an interviewer. Each of these points, I believe, was important to my research process, as it allowed me to immerse myself in the data after the interviews had been completed.

Upon completing the transcribing, I had concluded the first stage of the heuristic process of phenomenological inquiry, immersion (Moustakas, 1990). Up until I had completed the task of transcribing, I spent the majority of my time in this research study

"immersing" myself in the "texture, tone, mood, range, and content" of the experience of first-year English teachers (Patton, 1990, p. 409). I was totally involved in the world of the experience of first-year English teachers, "questioning, meditating, dialoguing, daydreaming, and indwelling" (Patton, 1990, p. 409). In addition, I spent close to 45 hours interviewing first-year English teachers.

Following immersion, Moustakas (1990) outlines two stages of the meaning-making process that seem to me to be congruent with the processes of poring over transcripts, bracketing interesting passages (Seidman, 1998), and recognizing emergent themes. Moustakas (1990) refers to these steps as incubation and illumination. During the incubation process, the researcher withdraws and contemplates, allowing the space for awareness, insights, and understanding (Patton, 1990). During this phase of the research process, I was thorough in my reading of the transcripts and patient with the process. I closely read each transcript and used open coding protocols to mark passages that I viewed as particularly salient or striking. After reading each participant's three interviews, I again noted the salient passages I had marked and then wrote a "first thoughts" profile of the participant. These "first thoughts" pieces were crucial in allowing me to synthesize what I knew about each participant from the interviews with what I had read about their experiences in the transcripts.

In the next stage of the meaning-making process, illumination, the experience of the first year of teaching English began to take on a vividness for me. During this phase, I was still immersed in the transcripts but came to a new understanding of the meaning of my participants' experiences. I identified themes in the participants' stories, and the themes formed "clusters and parallels," (Patton, 1990, p. 410). Additionally, I needed to

"trust myself as a reader" of transcripts (Seidman, 1998, p. 101), exercising my good judgment as an educator and researcher about what is significant in the transcripts (Seidman, 1998). During this phase, I created a "summary sheet" for each participant, which detailed the salient themes and categories from their first-year experience. I then used the constant comparison method with these 10 summary sheets, looking for commonalities and shared experiences across cases. Once I had identified eight common categories, I created electronic files for each category and cut and pasted each participant's relevant excerpts into those eight category files.

The final stages of the heuristic process of phenomenological inquiry are explication and creative synthesis (Moustakas, 1990). During my process of explication, I wrote several researcher memos to make sense of what I have found significant from the interviews. I connected the themes I had culled with the primary themes of the first year of teaching that already exist in the research literature. In this stage, I closely read and examined the files I had created for each category, looking again for which participants' excerpts seemed most salient and relevant to each category.

During the final stage of analysis, creative synthesis, I brought together all the pieces that emerged from this study into a "total experience" (Patton, 1990, p. 410). I used my electronic filing system of interview excerpts to combine categories that made sense. As a result of this process, new categories were created and I was faced with needing to figure out a logical way in which these three categories could fit together. It was in this stage that I devised my analytic framework, which is analyzing beginning teacher identity as it develops in three contexts: the self, the classroom, and professional culture. As I crafted each of the final chapters of this study, I intended to show patterns

and relationships among my participants' experiences as first-year English teachers, staying true to the aim of phenomenological research, which is to come to understand the nature or essence of an essentially human experience (van Manen, 1990). Patton (1990) describes this culmination of the heuristic research process as creating "a new vision of the experience" (p. 410). My representation of the first year of teaching English, told through my participants' excerpts, follows.

CHAPTER 4

"COMING OUT OF MY SHELL": THE STRUGGLE TO CRAFT A TEACHER IDENTITY

> Because teachers are living beings, they suffer objectification like other members of society; they also are thrust into molds. They play roles in many ways defined by others, although their interpretations of these roles must, in some manner, be grounded in an understanding of themselves. (Greene, 1978, p. 39)

> Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; Good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher. (Palmer, 1998, p. 10)

In Chapters 4, 5, and 6, I will examine ten first-year English teachers' experiences in three specific contexts: the self, the classroom, and professional culture (Figure 1). In each of these contexts, the first-year teacher participants in this study experienced some level of disequilibrium as they negotiated their roles and identities. As novices entering a new career, they each experienced their transitions into teaching as a disruption, or a loss of stability, of their knowledge of themselves, their knowledge of teaching, and their knowledge of organizational culture.

First, as I will discuss in this chapter, the teachers I interviewed grappled with constructing a new identity for themselves—a teacher identity—a process that Featherstone (1993) refers to as "the crafting of a public identity" (p. 101). Second, and as I will discuss in Chapter 5, these first-year English teachers spent most of their time in school inside of their classrooms with their students. Thus, they spent a considerable amount of time negotiating their roles as English language arts teachers and their commitments to "the call of service" (Coles, 1993). Finally, as entrants into a brand new workplace, these ten teachers each experienced both positive and negative aspects of the professional cultures of their respective schools, which, in turn, informed their

burgeoning identities within the larger culture of teaching and schooling. Their experiences with the hierarchical power structures within their schools will be discussed in Chapter 6.

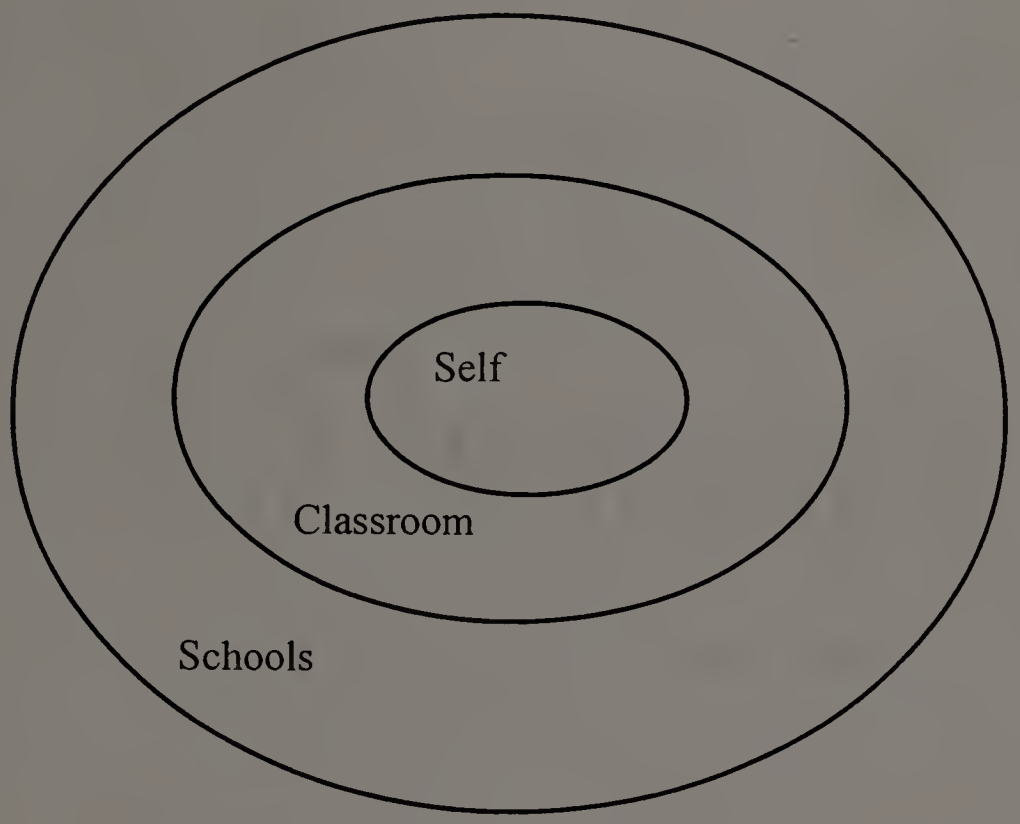

Figure 1. The Three Spheres of My Analysis of First-Year Teachers' Experiences

> ...I have come to feel that self-knowledge is a major fruit—perhaps *the* major fruit—of early teaching experience...intimately bound up with the struggle to understand and change the self. (Featherstone, 1993, p. 94)

As Featherstone (1993) indicates, the most immediate site of a new teacher's learning is the self. Each of the first-year teachers I interviewed, who ranged in age from 23 to 50 years old, thoughtfully described their experiences with the "disequilibrium" of negotiating their teacher identities (Gallagher & Stahlnecker, 2002). Gallagher and Stahlnecker (2002) believe that a realistic view of teacher development is grounded in the notion of productive disequilibrium, a state of unbalance and discomfort that the teacher must necessarily embrace in order to grow and develop.

Teachers can also experience their disequilibrium as unproductive, where they are not able to modify their existing schema of teaching, students, or professionalism, for example, to make room for new ideas and experiences. Whether a teacher is able to turn her state of disequilibrium into a productive or unproductive experience is largely dependent on her ability to cope with flux and change: her attitude toward her new endeavor, self-awareness, sense of agency, reflexivity, and support.

The notion of disequilibrium struck me as particularly relevant to the first-year of teaching, as it is well documented as a time of struggle and questioning for most. It is also a time of great learning, and, as Joyce (1984) points out below, our productive use of disequilibrium can lead us to new learning and to integrate change into our lives.

> Important growth requires change. We have to give up our comfortable ways of thinking and survive the buffets of taking on unfamiliar ideas, skills, and values. The need to grow is built into the fiber of our being. We are impelled upward in a developmental sense. Paradoxically, however, we have an ingrained tendency to conserve our beings as they are or were. Nostalgia is, in fact, a yearning not to have grown or changed. We would like to go back and see things the way we could when we were young and untutored. Curiously, the answer is to produce disequilibrium—to create environments that impel us to change, not discarding what we were at any given stage, but learning to build on it productively (p. 33).

Upon my analysis of my participants' narratives, I noticed that, while most of them did indeed struggle, few of them viewed their struggles with identity, role, and philosophy as unproductive or burdensome. At the end of their first year of teaching, each of these teachers emerged with a new understanding of themselves—the fruit of self-knowledge (Featherstone, 1993)—that, undoubtedly, was spawned by the frequent and sometimes constant state of disequilibrium in which they found themselves throughout the year.

For example, as you will see later in this chapter, Tori, an English teacher in an urban high school, was able to reflect on her developing sense of herself as a teacher, her teaching identity. She entered her first year of teaching trying to be someone other than herself. She found herself piecing together images of her past teachers with images of a professional, adult authority. As the year went on, Tori gained more clarity about who she was as a teacher, and she began to integrate her "real" self, her identity, into her teacher persona. In this way, Tori was able to come to a better understanding of herself as a teacher, as an authority figure, as a professional. Tori's story is one example of a teacher's experience with productive disequilibrium.

The theme of productive disequilibrium is also relevant to a first year teacher's development because the first year of teaching is often seen as a period of transformation, as the novice moves from her role as a student to the role of a teacher. And, as with other periods of transition or change in our lives, the transformation of a student into a teacher does not come without struggle. In fact, it is often through struggling and questioning the self that we move from one stage of our lives to the next. In this way, struggle and imbalance can be seen in a productive light, for the fruit of this uncomfortable period is often new knowledge of the self and new understandings of the self, as Featherstone (1993) points out.

Apprenticeship of Observation

> Beginning teachers form a coherent sense of themselves as professionals by combining parts of their past…with pieces of the present in their current school contexts…(Feiman-Nemser, 2001, pp. 1029-1030)

As I analyzed interview transcripts from the four and a half hours I spent with each participant, I pieced together the component parts of their discussions of identity and roles as teachers. Many of the ten teachers I interviewed spoke at length about teachers of their own who positively influenced them, teachers who they aspired to be like in some way. Through recollecting influential teachers from their pasts and through connecting these teachers' practice to their own, the first-year teachers were reconstructing bits of their "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975), an informal apprenticeship to teaching that spans the years and thousands of hours that most of us have spent in school.

Lortie (1975) contends that one's apprenticeship-of-observation, despite its significance in helping to form our views of teachers and teaching, does not prepare prospective teachers for what he calls "the inner world of teaching" (p. 65). Based on my participants' narratives about the influences of their former teachers, I found that their experiences observing and interacting with teachers throughout their lives *did* have a considerable impact on their notions of themselves as teachers, their "inner worlds," so to speak. Due in large part to the gifts of time, reflection, and audience that they were afforded through their participation in this study, these ten first-year teacher participants were able to tell stories about their teachers and then connect pieces of those stories to their own identities as teachers.

During the first of the three interview series with each participant, I asked them what their own experiences in school had been like. I also asked my teacher participants to tell me about teachers they remembered, those who were memorable either for good or for ill. I found, much like Lortie (1975), that the majority of the ten teachers I interviewed volunteered information about how their current teaching is affected by the teaching they received when they were students. The unsolicited connections my teacher participants made between their teaching and the teaching they once received leads me to believe that their apprenticeships of observation influenced a portion of their identities as teachers. In fact, one of my participants succinctly captures the essence of this influence: "I feel like I'm still trying to aspire to be like the teachers that I had in high school, the teachers that I respected in high school and admired" (Maria). Eight of the ten participants described teachers who influenced their practice, their role, and their identity as teachers.

Cathy is an eighth grade English language arts teacher in Central New York State. Cathy admitted, during the interviews, to hating English language arts throughout her K-12 school experience. So, the moment when she stopped hating English is quite vivid in her mind; it was a moment that was precipitated by an attentive and thoughtful teacher. Here, Cathy describes the community college professor who introduced her, for the first time, to her talents with language and also to the power of good teaching.

> ...I had one professor who completely changed my life...who I'm still in contact with right now. He was my English composition teacher...and, he was curious about language and he encouraged us to be curious. And, one day we had to meet and sit down in a conference with him, and I brought my essay in there thinking, "I just want to get out of here." He sat down with me and started talking with me about my writing and he said, "You know, you really have some potential here as a writer."...No one had ever said that to me before...At that point I was like, "Really? You really think

> that I have potential?" And, he said, "Let me show you a couple tricks." And, he flipped over my paper, and showed me a couple things…to make my writing sound better. And it was at that point that a light went on…It was like all of a sudden stuff started to click for me. And, I wanted to be a great writer, and do great reading and [have an] understanding of language. So, he really changed my life…I hated English in high school. [I] majored in it [in college]. Now I'm teaching it…At that point I really did start to view teaching as something that's very powerful, that's able to transform someone's life because [he] did that for me. (Cathy)

Valerie is a high school English teacher in an urban school in Southeastern Massachusetts. In thinking about how her own teaching practice connects with the teaching she received as a student, Valerie recollects two teachers in whose practice she sees her own teacher identity—a balanced blend of maternal and zany, of organization and spontaneity.

> …[In] 4th grade, Mrs. Mullin was a very maternal woman…I don't mean to say you have to be maternal to be a good teacher, just that I identified with her. I saw her sometimes as a motherly figure. And she just got through to me…She was very structured, she was very organized and Mr. Davis was haphazard, all over the place…[Mrs. Mullin] knew what the heart of the lesson was, what you should know, and was able to convey that a little bit better than Mr. Davis, who, like I said, was all over the place. And I see a little of myself in Mr. Davis sometimes because I'm not organized, and I try to be structured and I'm just not. I have to find some sort of system…But Mrs. Mullin, I remember her being just a cool woman…She was very concerned about us as kids, interested in who we were…That affects you later on…[because I take] different elements of teachers that I really liked, [and] try to swoosh them together. A little bit of Mr. Davis, a little bit of Mrs. Mullin (Valerie).

Sarah, who teaches seventh grade writing in an urban middle school in Eastern Massachusetts, recalls her first "inspirational" teacher, her high school English teacher. By attending to his students' writing and encouraging their growth as writers, Mr. Kraft's legacy provides Sarah with some internal guidance in identifying who she wants to be as an English language arts teacher.

> ... It wasn't until high school that I enjoyed writing...I had an excellent [English] teacher in high school. His name was Mr. Kraft...he was so encouraging about writing. He brought us to poetry festivals and creative writing festivals...If he liked something you wrote, he would encourage you to re-write it or to write more...He was probably one of the most inspirational teachers that I ever had...[He] was the teacher I would want to model myself after... (Sarah)

Rebecca, who teaches high school English in a rural, technical/vocational school in Western Massachusetts, had a similar experience with a high school English teacher. Rebecca's ninth grade English teacher inspired her to teach and provided her with an early experience in the teaching of English.

> ... My ninth grade English teacher who was half of the humanities section was fabulous...She had us read Nancy Willard's *Things Invisible to See*, and I loved it...So my sophomore year she invited me to come back to do a lesson on *Things Invisible to See* in her ninth grade class, which I was on cloud nine about. I thought that was great...I remember feeling really proud of doing that and really liking it...That was pretty influential and...I've sent her a couple notes about how much she influenced me. (Rebecca)

Finally, Maria, who teaches high school English with Valerie at a large, urban high school in Southeastern Massachusetts, recollects those teachers from her past who she aspires to model herself after.

> ...I think about my freshman history teacher, my geography teacher, and he's who I want to be...Just that I respected him so much...I wanted to do so well for him and it mattered. And my drama teacher and junior English [teacher], I want to be like her...It's teachers that I want to be like, little bits of them, and the respect they had for me that I want the students to have, the interest they sparked in me that I want to spark in students. (Maria)

From this sampling of interview excerpts, one can get a sense of the impact that former teachers had on these participants. As Feiman-Nemser (2001) points out, beginning teachers piece together the past and the present in the formation of their teaching identities. It is clear that my participants did not learn to teach from watching

their former teachers. They did not learn how to grade papers, plan a lesson, or handle disruptive students. But, they did learn something just as significant; they learned how to be in the world as a teacher, how to treat students, and how to strike a balance between friend and role model.

These teachers' stories of their experiences with past teachers expand Lortie's (1975) notion of the apprenticeship of observation. For, their recollections of these teachers are not simplistic but are filled with affective details; these five teachers discuss feeling proud, respected, encouraged, inspired, transformed, and cared for by their teachers. It should come as no surprise later on that these same teachers work so hard to create connected communities of learners within their classrooms. Their early experiences with teachers clearly helped to shape their visions of themselves as teachers—their teacher identities.

Lortie (1975) contends that, as students, most of us learned about teaching in an intuitive way rather than an analytical one, and that one's apprenticeship-of-observation, despite its importance, does not prepare prospective teachers for what he calls "the inner world of teaching" (p. 65). Perhaps the teachers' apprenticeships of observation did not prepare them for the day-to-day challenges of teaching and the "behind the scenes" responsibilities of the job. But, I strongly feel that these teachers' experiences did have a profound effect on their inner worlds of teaching; having good, nurturing models early on allowed these beginning teachers to glimpse the possibilities that teacher/student relationships hold and provided them with the inner images of how important a teacher can be in a student's life. Cathy summarizes nicely the connection between her own experience with teachers and her current teaching practice, "...I have

to give credit to my teachers...I was lucky enough to have great professors and great teachers. So, to me I'm just passing down what I've learned from them" (Cathy).

Student Identity/Teacher Identity

During the years that most of us spent in our apprenticeships of observation, we were developing and honing our identities as students. And, since teaching and learning in schools are inextricably linked, it makes sense to examine who these beginning teachers were as students and how their identities as students inform their understanding of their own students. Three of the ten teachers I interviewed spoke at length about their own turbulent experiences as students in middle and high school. I find their stories significant and compelling because of the way in which these three teachers have been able to see themselves in their own students.

During high school, Andrew was a self-described "slacker." Although he was academically talented, he did not want to be labeled a "nerd" and thus went to great lengths to perform at an average level in school. During his senior year of high school, he published an underground newspaper, which many in the school and community believed to be slanderous. Because he had embarrassed his teachers and peers, and because he had abused his privileges as the editor of the school newspaper, he was expelled from school. His expulsion was later revoked and he was allowed to return to school and to graduate. But, his recollection of his rebellion against the system has stayed with him, and he taps his own experience as a "slacker" when he's faced with the same attitude in one of his students. In this sense, Andrew's experience as a student provides him with a context to draw on as he tries to motivate and work with his own

high school students, many of whom are rural and poor and have a difficult time seeing the usefulness or purpose of schooling.

> ...I can really relate to the slacker point of view. And, in fact, those are the kids that really get under my skin the most, the kids that I know aren't trying at all...because I can see myself in them. I feel like I just want to say to them sometimes, "Don't do all the stupid things that I did." You know? But, some things you just have to learn on your own. I mean, I certainly had to...If anybody told me at 15 that I would be teaching English at a high school, I would have told them they were absolutely insane. They were out of their minds...Because I didn't see that. I didn't see myself being part of the whole...compulsory education system. I really thought that was for suckers, and losers, and jerks. And, I really deeply felt that as a kid. And, I know that that's the way [my student] feels about some of it. I can see it in his face, just the way he walks around the school (Andrew)

For Meredith, seeing herself in one of her students was more traumatic than it was for Andrew. As someone who never really connected academically or socially in high school, Meredith was not a good student. She saw school as something to get through, not as an opportunity or a pathway to her future. In addition, as the eldest child in her family, she admitted to having a "princess" complex in her early teens, symptoms of which she is able to see in one of her own students at her suburban high school in Central Massachusetts.

> ...I didn't do well in high school...I had no concept of the big picture of what education was about, so I kind of blew it off and just thought this is what I have to do, everybody does it. So, I wasn't a good student at all. I can totally identify with my current students...I have one student who is like I was when I was 14. I really have a hard time with her. She's a little princess...She just thinks that she can go anywhere she wants, any point of the day that she wants...I actually kicked her out of my classroom. It was the first kid I ever kicked out, and I was shaking when I was doing it because she was just so confrontational...That was a situation where I couldn't even give her detention because I couldn't even look at her...I felt her behavior so personally because I completely identified with her behavior. She needed the control, she needed the power, and she was being stubborn because she didn't see any other way to be. And that's

> exactly how I was when I was 15, and the only thing I could do would be to turn my back on her and say "Out." (Meredith)

Although Meredith admits that she felt this student's behavior so personally and was shaking during their confrontation, she goes on to explain her method in dealing with other students in whom she sees herself. She has called on her own experiences as a student to aid her in her relationships with students who seem disinterested in school and in learning. Similar to Andrew's story, Meredith has mined her recollections of her own school experiences to inform her practice as a first-year teacher.

In Cathy's case, she recollects hating English in school. In fact, Cathy disliked English until she met Professor Sears at community college, the professor who she described as having changed her life. In the first section of this chapter, Cathy discussed how Professor Sears allowed her to see the power of effective teaching and, ultimately, inspired her to become an English teacher. Like Andrew and Meredith, Cathy draws on her own experience as a student to help her better understand her role and identity as an English language arts teacher. Here she describes her ability to empathize with her eighth grade students' disinterest in English language arts class.

> ...I think that it gives me a little bit more empathy for what they're going through...I have more of an understanding of how they're feeling and how they might be experiencing the class...So, I understand that. I understand that they don't like English...It's upsetting, but it's really pushing me to be better at what I do. (Cathy)

These three teachers' abilities to effectively mine their own experiences for use in their first year of teaching is useful in our design of preservice preparation programs. For, though it is commonplace for preservice teachers to examine their apprenticeships of observation, it is not as common to ask preservice teachers to write about and reflect on their own experiences as students. What values did they hold as students? What did

they connect with as students? What did they rebel against and why? Like Nieto (2003) and many others, I share the premise that our autobiographies inform who we become as teachers. Andrew, Meredith, and Cathy are able to thoughtfully articulate how their memories of themselves as students help inform who they are as teachers.

Teaching & Performing: "Playing" the Role of the Adult Authority

> ...The new teacher is constantly on stage and urgently needs to develop a performing self with whom he or she can live comfortably. (Featherstone, 1993, p. 101)

The links between teaching and acting are obvious. In both endeavors, you have an audience, a stage, props, and, to a certain extent, a script. But, I was surprised to find several of my participants using the language of the theater to describe their struggles to develop a teaching identity, a public persona. As Featherstone (1993) states, the teacher, much like the actor, needs to develop a public self with whom she can live. I can recall this struggle for myself when, upon finding myself yelling at my students during my first year of teaching, I had to reexamine who I was becoming as a teacher. The teacher I found myself becoming was not a comfortable fit for me, and I found myself in a state of disequilibrium, much like many of the teachers I interviewed. From that state of imbalance, I was able to understand ways that I could integrate, much like Tori, my "real" self with my teacher self. In this section, first-year teacher participants explore their personal processes of developing their public identities as teachers, as adults, and as authority figures.

Andrew describes the many personalities, or characters, he has to inhabit during the course of a school day. For him, different classes require different teacher behaviors

and characteristics, and so he has developed many sides to his teaching identity to suit these various contexts.

> ...I have different groups of kids where I have basically different personalities, and that's where being the actor comes into play...I have to change in those three minutes between periods sometimes from being a hard guy to being a nice guy, simply because I know what works with what particular group. And, in that sense you really have to know who you're dealing with... (Andrew)

Andrew's "change of character" between periods is indicative of his knowledge of his students and his sensitivity to and responsiveness to their personalities and foibles. In the same interview, Andrew spoke at length about his experiences using sarcasm in the classroom and how he has learned, over time, that all high school students neither appreciate nor get his sarcastic tone or comments. So, he has adjusted his teacher identity to accommodate for this, just as he adjusts on a daily basis to become the best teacher he can be for any particular group of students. Andrew's comment above is also interesting to me because it shatters the image of a static teacher role. Rather, Andrew's description of "being the actor" reveals that, throughout the day, he is called upon to play different roles as a teacher; he is sometimes the "hard guy" and sometimes the "nice guy." Andrew's identity as a teacher is someone who can play multiple roles, much like an actor who is considered versatile and amorphous, rather than someone who is typecast in one, fixed role. Andrew's ability to "flex" and adapt his teacher persona to the environment of the classroom is a complex skill, one that is frequently associated with expert, veteran teachers.

Perhaps one of the more difficult roles that first-year teachers have to play is that of an adult authority figure, which is an aspect of Andrew's identity as a teacher that he has had a difficult time reconciling. As one who rebelled against authority as a student

and was expelled from school for doing so, Andrew describes his new role as "ironic" and as a kind of "karmic cycle...where I was so anti-authority as a kid, now I have to be the authority figure and fully realize the whole ramification of that." But, just like stepping into character for each class, Andrew has come to grips with his authoritative role by seeing it as a mask that he puts on from time to time.

> ...So, there's this sense that being an authority figure is something that you can put on, it's like a mask or anything else, a personality that you can put on for a short period of time. And sometimes it's necessary. And, in that sense, that's what it's about, the necessity of it rather than wanting to do it. (Andrew)

In this comment, we can see the intersection of Andrew's past with his present; that is, the once anti-authoritarian is now finding it necessary, though not particularly desirable, to be an authority figure. Another teacher, Tori, experienced a similar tension during her first year of teaching. As a student who, like Andrew, questioned the legitimacy of the authority figures in her life, she now finds herself struggling to put on the mask of authority.

> ...There's a part of me that is still very anti-establishment and [anti-]authority, but then here I am trying to be an authority figure in front of these students... And it's like, "What do I know?" I don't think I was quite confident in my skills, "Do I really know that much? Do I really know my material that well?" I think a lot of it was the age difference. It was too close. And, in my real life I'm pretty irresponsible. I'll be honest...I always have to get into that mentality..."I have to be a serious, professional teacher here." And I'm working with colleagues who are the ages of my parents. I need to have my act together. (Tori)

Tori's struggle, though related to Andrew's, seems to be wrapped up in her personal process of maturing and taking on an adult life. While Andrew is 25 years old, married, a member of the Army National Guard, and a homeowner, Tori is 23 years old, single, and her first year of teaching represented her first, full-time job in "the real

world." Having gone from her undergraduate program straight to graduate school in teacher education, Tori is not only struggling with her developing teacher identity, but she is also struggling with her developing adult identity. She is trying to negotiate who she is in the world as an adult while negotiating who she is in her school as a teacher. In this sense, Tori, like many young, beginning teachers, I suspect, is experiencing disequilibrium on two fronts: as an adult and as a teacher. The tension she describes above is a combination of confidence, age, experience, and image, all of which are constantly shifting variables as we seek to become comfortable with who we are. Tori continues to elaborate on her internal struggle with identity:

> ...It's like me coming out of my shell...It's such a struggle of who you envision a teacher is supposed to be and who you are. But, what it really is is coming into your own. I am Tori, myself and the teacher at the same time. In my outer life, I don't want to deal with bull, I'm very direct, and that's how I want to deal with it. But, then you see these teachers in your mind from the past and they're like very maternal, very motherly...very caring of you and encouraging you. And, maybe that's not the type of teacher I am. I'm the teacher that's more direct. I'm the teacher that's like, "This is what I want to see, and this is how it's going to be." And I think that the more I come to the realization of myself as I am, coming into my own as a teacher who's me, it fits me. And I think that's like the biggest thing that I'm coming to realize. (Tori)

This excerpt captures the intersection of Tori's apprenticeship of observation ("who you envision a teacher is supposed to be") and Tori's developing identity as a teacher ("who you are"). This quote also captures Tori's realization that her true self, the self she describes in her "outer life," can indeed be the person she is as a teacher. Tori has realized by the end of her first year of teaching that being true to herself and being herself in the classroom is probably the best way for her to be a teacher. And, she is clear about not wanting to be something she's not. The following excerpt concludes Tori's thoughts on her identity as a teacher. Tori explains below how being Chinese-

American has affected her work as an English teacher in an urban high school with a majority African-American population.

> ...The best thing to do is to be yourself because you want [your students] to be real. And you need to be real with them...And, I think being Asian is a very interesting factor in my relationship with [students] because they recognize that I represent the establishment in some ways, but they also recognize that I'm a person of color. And so I think they're willing, because a lot of our conversations, probably because of the books I choose, revolve around race...they're more open to express certain opinions with me than they would be with a white person, I think...They know that I come in with White, middle class values...they do recognize that part of me that has these middle class values, that's where I come from. (Tori)

This excerpt provides a window into the effects that race and ethnicity have had and continue to have on Tori's developing identity, both as a working adult and as a teacher. Tori shared with me several stories about how her race and discussions about race have played into her upbringing in a small Texas town, her education in Texas, her graduate school experience in the Northeast, and her summer school teaching experiences during college. During a decidedly anti-authoritarian time in her life, a time Tori described as her "Malcolm X phase," her Chinese heritage and the color of her skin played a prominent role in her identity. Now, as an English teacher in a multiethnic urban school, Tori has come to realize the contradictory nature of her authoritative position as it intersects with her race—"I represent the establishment, but...I'm a person of color." As she negotiates her role as a teacher and an authority figure, Tori continues to struggle with how her race plays into the equation.

Tori's struggle, her experience with the disequilibrium of her first year of teaching, seems to be taking place on three separate but related levels. On one level, Tori is struggling with her new role as an adult authority figure, a struggle that is

complicated by her decidedly anti-authoritarian stance in her younger years. On a second level, Tori is coming to better understand how she can be herself and a teacher at the same time; that is, she is reaching a more balanced sense of how she can incorporate more of her personality and her true identity into her role as a teacher. Finally, on a third level, Tori still struggles with the complexities of being a person of color and yet inhabiting a professional role that represents "the establishment." This struggle is further complicated by the fact that Tori is Asian and middle class, two labels that carry all sorts of stereotypes and expectations. This third level of struggle for Tori is extremely interesting, and I am left to wonder if I would have encountered more of this tension—the tension between race, class, and the role of a teacher—had I interviewed other ethnic minorities in this study.

Like other participants, Maria echoes Tori's sentiment of "be who you are." As someone who has wanted to be a teacher since the third grade, Maria has spent lots of time thinking about the kind of teacher she hoped to become. In our interview, Maria made no bones about the fact that, with her urban students, "being real" is what counts, just as Tori iterated above.

> ...You have to be comfortable with who you are and like who you are...Kids realize if you don't like who you are or if you are uncomfortable with yourself in some way or if you're fake in some way. They pick up on that really quickly, and they don't like that...(Maria)

In contrast to the others, Rebecca feels quite comfortable in her role as a teacher and as an authority figure. Rebecca's comfortableness stems from her experience as a performer, and also from the fact that Rebecca is a 29-year old, first-year teacher who has come to teaching after trying several different career paths. Rebecca's excerpt below depicts the most direct comparison made by any of the ten teachers between

teaching and acting and illustrates the ease with which she is able to "play" the role of teacher.

> ...Maybe why I like being a teacher is because I'm not involved in any other kind of performance. It's my outlet. It really is the same skills that you learn, from projecting so that the kids who are crouched down in their desks in the back can hear you to knowing when you can be silly or do some physical goofy movement to make a kid laugh or pay attention to you or to command attention through your behavior, demeanor or voice, or whatever. I mean, it's the same stuff that you're trying to do on stage as you're trying to do as the star of the classroom, because frankly the teacher is the star of the classroom...If you aren't the star of the show as a teacher you're the director of the play...It seems like in almost all my classes I'm the one who guides them through their emotions or their tasks for the day or whatever it is. "Okay everybody's hyper now, let's bring you down"...It doesn't feel like two completely different things, performance and teaching, because I see teaching as a performance. But what's good about that for me, whereas maybe it's difficult for some people, is I feel comfortable in the role as a performer so I never think twice about it. (Rebecca)

Rebecca's experience with the theater and with performance allow her to make these direct comparisons between the skill set needed for teaching and the skill set needed for acting. Projection, physicality, and the ability to "command attention" are skills that Rebecca possesses and employs in her day-to-day work in the classroom. In addition, her comfortableness with performing makes teaching a good fit for her; she seems to be at ease with her first-year teacher persona.

From these excerpts in this section, one can see how becoming comfortable with one's self in the first year of teaching is a process, a process that is not necessarily easy or comfortable. It is essential, I believe, for beginning teachers to learn to accept this discomfort, these tensions involved in negotiating their teacher identities. For, it is through struggle and discomfort, through accepting the state of productive disequilibrium in the first year of teaching, that novice teachers will better come to

integrate their "true" selves and their teacher selves, their past and their present, into one comfortable identity.

"A Line in the Sand": Boundaries in Teacher-Student Relationships

Being yourself with your students sounds easy, and many first-year teachers enter their beginning year hoping to be liked by their students. Perhaps because a majority of first-year teachers are in the 22-25 year old age range, connecting with middle and high school students turns out to be trickier than they originally thought. Oftentimes, novice teachers will try too hard to become friends with their students, thereby blurring the boundaries between friend and teacher. Teachers who are wary of this pitfall, of course, may overcompensate the other way and may disconnect altogether from any meaningful relationships with their students. So, the charge becomes one of balance. As yet another component of their developing teacher identities, first-year teachers have to carefully balance their relationships with students by creating boundaries that are flexible, sustainable, and agreeable to them and to their students.

Here, Andrew explains his view that setting boundaries with students is like drawing a line in the sand.

> ...You can be friendly with kids, but it's a mistake to try and be friends with them, especially because their notions of what friendship means are probably highly different from yours... I mean, I have gotten pretty close to kids...where maybe there is a line there that is very gray, and it's a line in the sand, where you kind of have to watch what you're doing. But, you do have to be a role model too, and that involves exposing yourself. It involves exposing your thought processes and your decisions, and things like that. And, in that sense I try to be fairly transparent with the kids...[But] there's always that line there, and it's very difficult to see sometimes, especially up close. And sometimes, like with other things, you don't know until you've crossed it. (Andrew)

Resisting the temptation to "be friends" with one's students seems tough to do, especially, as Andrew notes, because good teachers are constantly aware of their position as role models. As a role model, it is detrimental to portray yourself as one who is incapable of opening up to students or of becoming vulnerable during a school day. So, part of the balance that Andrew addresses is recognizing where to draw the line for each student. And, as he notes, sometimes you don't know where to draw the line until you have crossed it once or twice. Barbara voices similar concerns below. She, too, is conscious of the line in the sand.

> … I had to remember to be the adult and keep a boundary. You really have to be careful not to be their friend. Well, you can be their friend but not their pal…You really have to be careful because if you act too casually with them they don't get the right message. And, they can do things that are probably not appropriate. It's probably different for me as an older teacher going in…because I don't think I would be the object of any admiration, or you know, amore, which I know some of the other teachers have… You want to be friendly but you don't want to be their buds. You really don't. You have to keep that really tough border and that boundary to keep yourself safe too, because if you really let your guard down, they can suck you in. (Barbara)

As a 45-year-old, first-year teacher, Barbara doesn't think she has to worry about high school students developing crushes on her, but she clearly has concerns about getting too close to kids and sending the wrong message. Additionally, she notes that students "can suck you in," a concern that Andrew also raised when he stated, "You can't let them invade your personal life." In addition to developing a sense of clear boundaries with students, these two beginning teachers also have developed their own limits, in terms of how much "student baggage" they take home at night. Barbara, who teaches high school English in a suburban district in Western Massachusetts, puts her point of view into perspective by drawing comparisons between teaching and parenting.

> ...When you are a parent it's a whole different world. You've had all these weird things happen to you already, so if it happens in your classroom you just sit there and go "Oh, okay, well I've been through this before. I've heard that excuse before." And I think the kids understand that...they know that I have kids...(Barbara)

Barbara also points out that, as a first-year teacher, she came into her new position wanting to be liked by her students. The need or desire to be liked by one's students often turns into a trap for first-year teachers. For, new teachers often sacrifice their professionalism and their power in the classroom in order to "get in good" with their students. This often backfires, and new teachers can be faced with students who are unclear or unaware of any boundaries between them and their teacher. As Barbara states below, she quickly realized that her need to be liked had to be trumped by her need for professional boundaries between she and her students.

> ... At first I wanted to be liked. I wanted to be liked by everybody because if you are liked, you feel better about yourself...But I realized that if I suffered because I had a student who didn't get along with me or didn't like me for whatever reason, I would not be doing a service to myself or the other students... (Barbara)

Whereas Barbara has experienced the emotional roller coater of adolescence with four of her own kids, Cathy does not have children of her own. So, during her first year of teaching, Cathy had very little experience with middle school students on which to base her philosophy about setting boundaries. Cathy did what any thoughtful but unsure person would do; she played it safe by keeping her distance, by setting clear, professional boundaries between her and her students.

> ...This was a really hard year for me because I wanted to be liked by people, as I think anyone wants to be, but I really had to sit there and listen to [students] who didn't like me and didn't like English...And, that was so hard for me to do. It was extremely hard...In my student teaching placement, I was the teacher who came into the veteran teacher's class, and I was younger so the kids liked me and it was cool. But, now here I

> am as the teacher and I'm saying, "We're going to keep this very professional" And that was hard. That was probably one of the hardest things. And it's hard when you walk by someone else's classroom and your students are in there and they're hanging out with this other teacher and bonding with them, or they're asking the other teacher, "Oh Miss So-and-so, would you do this?" Or "Sign my yearbook." Or, "Here's a Christmas gift." And, here I am… juggling [these roles]. I think you can choose one or the other as a beginning teacher…You're walking this tightrope of friend, teacher, friend. So, you set some clear boundaries…just for your own sanity. (Cathy)

Although Cathy was envious of the teachers who seemed able to get closer to their students, she maintained her professional stance throughout her first year of teaching. This stance clearly had its advantages and disadvantages. One the one hand, Cathy was able to stay focused on her own development as a teacher and on the job to be done. One the other hand, she was pained by the distance that she kept between herself and her students. When we were discussing this during the interviews, Cathy clearly felt that she could have done a better job walking that tightrope that she describes. Yet, we are left to wonder. If Cathy had taken a difference stance, that of friend or pal to her students, would she have had as successful a first year?

Meredith draws a correlation between her age and her stance concerning boundary setting with her students.

> … There's a big difference between being a real person and being a friend. I know that when I was younger, and I [had] just graduated from college, I was insecure, and I would have needed to have my students like me. It would have been really hard for me to not try to be liked…and I would have had a really hard time with classroom management because they would have walked all over me…But I came into the school year knowing that I'm 10 years older than these kids, so I'm thinking "You have no power over me"…And, so it wasn't an issue for me at all. I don't need to be liked, and I don't need to be their friend. (Meredith)

As someone who has had other jobs and has entered teaching at 28 years old, Meredith is clear about her role in the classroom. As Sarah said during her interview,

"I'm not here to make friends with them." Meredith seems clear about this as well. But, the issue of setting boundaries with students is more than a professional concern. As Tori points out below, it is also a societal concern. Although Tori spoke openly, like the others, about setting clear boundaries in the classroom, here she almost laments the fact that once her students leave her classroom, their lives become foreign and untouchable to her.

> …You know them in the context of your class, and you see them out in the hall and they recognize you…But the truth of the matter is, I don't live in Dorchester, and I did not grow up they way they grew up, so I think in that aspect I don't know them…And I don't think I'll ever really, really know them in that aspect of their lives, you know? To be really honest with you, that's where the relationship becomes very, very fuzzy… Like, maybe that's not my place, maybe that's not where I belong is to know every aspect of their lives. I think it's really easy sometimes for teachers to become very personally involved, and the truth is I can't control what happens, what they do when they're not in my classroom. It's a day-to-day thing, and I don't think that's my responsibility. It's really hard. I think that's something that we talked about a lot last year, that we're so young and we feel like maybe we go in with very unrealistically high expectations, that we're going to save these kids. They're more than just English students. But that's the most that I can control, and if whatever they learn in my classroom goes into their outside life, that's great. (Tori)

This excerpt from Tori highlights the complexity of teacher-student relationships because she is able to show us her ambivalence about her role as a teacher. As a young teacher, she came into an urban school wanting "to save these kids." But, at the end of her first year of teaching, she has the presence of mind to now question her ideal of "saving" kids. She says, "Maybe that's not my place." This excerpt also highlights the two-way street of boundary setting in the classroom.

Other teachers above have discussed the ways in which they were able to set boundaries around themselves, boundaries to keep the students from getting too close. Here, Tori seems to be discussing her need to set boundaries around her students, "I

can't control what happens, what they do when they're not in my classroom." She is allowing herself to break free from the notion that teaching and monitoring her students is a round-the-clock job. She is also being realistic about cultural and societal boundaries that prevent her from entering her students' lives, from knowing them outside of the school walls.

As we have seen in this chapter, first-year teachers experience unsettling discomfort on many fronts as they negotiate their public identities as teachers, as adults, and as authority figures. This discomfort, what I've referred to here as disequilibrium (Gallagher & Stahlnecker, 2002), is a necessary process in novice teachers' development. Though I have highlighted instances that illustrate first-year teachers' productive experiences with disequilibrium, my participants' experiences were not always productive. During the interviews, several participants told me stories of "useless" school policies, "administrivia," and their negative experiences in navigating the bureaucracy of their schools. Their experiences with the paperwork and culture of compliance in teaching seemed, to me, to have stunted their growth as teachers in that their experiences made them cynical and skeptical about the bureaucratic, administrative culture of schools.

My participants refused to alter their existing schema to make room for senseless procedures or protocols, but that alone does not make these stories examples of unproductive disequilibrium. They are unproductive experiences, I believe, because my participants were forced to comply with school protocols, while still harboring resentment or frustration about the sometimes difficult processes of submitting a request, following rules they believed to be absurd, or following "orders" from the

higher ups. This type of learned behavior in schools has the potential to force a teacher to be two different people in school, to "play the game," while trying to develop and maintain a sense of self in the classroom, a teaching identity. I think this is a dangerous stance for new teachers to learn, as it promotes an "us versus them" mentality between teachers and administrators, and it favors an institutionalized perspective of one's teaching over a internalized, or centered, perspective.

As we will see in the next chapter, first-year English teachers' experiences within the classroom, that is, their interactions with their students and their subject matter, play out a bit differently. While it could be argued that there may be less internal struggle involved in navigating one's subject matter, one's "speciality," life in the classroom involves teacher/student interaction, which results in different kinds of struggles and challenges for the first-year teacher, as we will see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

NEGOTIATING TEACHER IDENTITY IN THE CLASSROOM: ENGLISH AS "THE MOTHER SUBJECT"

When I proposed this research study, I made a decision to interview first-year teachers of English language arts. This decision stemmed primarily from my own experience as a high school English teacher. I was also inspired to limit this study to teachers of English because, during my time as a graduate teaching assistant in the Secondary Teacher Education Program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, I had the opportunity to teach a cohort of preservice English teachers for two semesters and to effectively them through the English methods class, their pre-practicum, and finally, their student teaching practicum. This teaching experience allowed me to witness preservice teachers' development as their ideals, which they had honed during their preparatory coursework, came into contact with the realities of schools. It was during this time that I realized that, for many of these preservice teachers, their subject matter, English language arts, was a sort of medium with which they could experiment with their teaching selves. It was then that I became curious about how English, as a "grab-bag, garbage-pail, everything-but-the-kitchen-sink discipline" (Elbow, 1990, p. 110), either cooperates with or contradicts beginning teachers' development and their developing identities.

> I remember thinking back in college that English was the mother subject…English seems to encompass all of these things, and in my own experience what really helped me learn was becoming a better reader and writer and a listener and being able to speak with people and using language in different ways. And, when I learned how to do that, I started to become really effective in all these other classes, and started to be able to be more successful and feel more successful…So, that's really why I see English as really important…I wanted to be a teacher, and I thought

> English was a great way of giving students the skills that I felt were so important to me and to other people. (Cathy)

Cathy's metaphor of English as the mother subject brings to mind phrases like "the mother ship" or "the mother lode"—"a creative or environmental source" (Morris, 1979). Cathy's metaphor struck me and resonated with me throughout my analysis of my participants' interview transcripts. Her notion of English as the source from which her skills and academic interests grew was intriguing for a couple of reasons. For one, the English language arts provide a wealth of resources and media from which to draw upon to build a classroom community. From reading fiction to autobiography, from journal writing to persuasive writing, from analyzing poetry to analyzing Walt Disney cartoons, the English language arts surely can be considered a creative source for teachers.

Second, because English is indeed such a creative source, it offers a pathway for beginning teachers to be more idealistic in their teaching. As I will discuss in this chapter, English offered my teacher participants a vehicle through which they could connect with their students. Nearly all of these ten teachers of English discussed the trusting, solid relationships that they were able to build with their students, and a few even discussed the nurturing, maternal qualities that they bring to teaching. One older participant consistently compared teaching to parenting and mothering throughout our interview process. By connecting their curricula to their students' lives through personal writing, popular culture, and current events, my first-year teacher participants were able to effectively create strong bonds with their students. And, by creating such powerful bonds through the sharing of writing or personal stories, these novice teachers were able to create the kinds of English language arts classrooms they had imagined and

envisioned. And so, English as "the mother subject" touches on the strength and depth of the bonds that these teachers felt they had developed with their students through the teaching.

Finally, the notion of English as "the mother subject" relates to the way that, more often than not, English provided these novice teachers a source from which their teacher identities could flow. That is, the wide-ranging possibilities of an English curriculum cooperated with my participants' developing visions of themselves as English teachers. Several of these first-year teachers, as will be discussed in this chapter, took risks in their teaching of English, risks that one might associate with a seasoned veteran and not a novice teacher. These risks were facilitated by teachers' ideals, by their visions of what the English language arts curriculum should provide students: critical thinking skills; the ability to question the status quo; the ability to develop a logical argument. The relative freedom that these beginning teachers felt in their curricular choices and in their classrooms allowed them to experiment with who they were becoming as teachers of language and literacy.

Building Bridges Through the English Language Arts

Eight out of the ten teachers talked about ways in which teaching English language arts afforded them opportunities to connect to their students. The teachers' commitment to fostering community and connectivity in their classrooms—"building bridges"— was an integral part of their teaching identities. As such, they strove to incorporate learning activities and writing assignments that afforded their students time to share and learn from one another. Sometimes, through a journal entry or class

discussion, teachers found their students sharing personal stories, opinions, or beliefs, which were interpreted as signs of trust and community. Other times, teachers made conscious efforts to connect curricula to their students' outside lives and interests. In these ways, my teacher participants were effectively using the English language arts curricula as a medium for expressing and fostering their teaching identities. In the following excerpts, the many ways that beginning teachers worked to build bridges through the English language arts is evident.

In the next three excerpts, Tori, Rebecca, and Sarah all discuss instances in their classrooms when they felt that certain writing assignments and activities struck a positive chord with their students. Through assigning personal narratives and journal entries, these three first-year teachers were able to learn more about their students and thus were able to connect with them on a personal level. It is important to note that these instances, taken out of context, did not occur in a vacuum or during the first week of school. I have no doubt that these powerful teaching moments occurred due to the fact that each of these teachers worked hard to create communities of trust and openness in their classrooms. The following three excerpts illustrate how three first-year teachers were able to build or continue to build strong, connective bonds with their students.

> Because I had such a good rapport with them, we ended up doing personal narratives at the end [of the year], and I loved it. It was a nice way to close out the year. MCAS was over and they were starting to drain a little. But everybody wants to talk about themselves…So it was cool to hear their stories. We made little scar people, and they wrote this [piece] to describe all the scars on their body. And, I shared my scars, and it was such an intimate unit…We were like a family…I think if you risk yourself…show a little of your personal side to them, they're willing to share too. And, everybody wants to tell their scar stories, and even some really personal ones. Like, some of them even shared like their heart scars, their emotional scars. (Tori)

> I think the nature of English [allows] a lot of kids share a lot of serious stuff…You find out some pretty intense things about their home life or their experiences they've gone through…And a couple times I've actually had to go to the guidance counselor and say "Oh I'm concerned about this."…They're almost always more forthcoming in their writing…Little things will slip out once you've read their writing…Especially the shier ones, the quiet ones…I have [the ninth graders] do a "Where I'm from" poem. I have the eleventh graders do a "Who Am I" autobiography project…It's just all this writing gets out crazy things…(Rebecca)

> Recently one of my classes showed a really deep interest in my religion…We got into this really big discussion about it, and I had them each write up something that they felt or that they knew about their religion…or a tradition or a family belief or something. And we discussed it as a class, and they could read parts if they wanted or they could read the whole thing if they wanted. And I wrote one too. And after the class, three of the girls came up to me and they said, "That was the most interesting class"…And it was so great. It was like they got to learn a little bit about me and I got to learn a little bit more about them…It was a very real moment. (Sarah)

In these three passages, these first-year teachers describe ways in which writing with their students allows a "sanctioned" way to connect with students. These teachers are using the tools that they have at hand—reading, writing, and discussion—to make real their visions of what schooling should be. Clearly, each of these three believes in the importance of connecting with students; without a connection between teacher and student, it is difficult to imagine learning taking place. And so connecting through writing in an English classroom seems natural, especially as so many English teachers combine the teaching of more formal writing styles with informal, or personal, writing. This view corresponds with Fox's (1993) findings that beginning English teachers come to value the teaching of writing as the most important aspect of teaching English language arts because "writing brings you so close to the students" (p. 11).

Another way for teachers to connect with their students through English language arts curriculum was to connect their English curriculum to their students'

lives. For Andrew, who teaches in a suburban high school, keeping his finger on the pulse of popular youth culture grants him access to students' lives and knowledge that might otherwise be ignored or undervalued in an academic setting. In the passage below, Andrew explains how using the lyrics of Eminem, a popular rap artist, enabled him to show students the complexity of poetry through song lyrics.

> Eminem is like this deity…[who has been elevated] to this godlike height of pop culture, and he can do no wrong in [the students'] eyes. He's this truly idolized figure, and I can kind of capitalize on that. When we did the poetry unit, I said, "What's the least offensive Eminem song I can find?" And, they had just come out with the "8 Mile" movie, and the soundtrack for that has a really motivational and uplifting song on it by him…And, so I took that into class, and I made the kids break it down. They didn't want to analyze what he was saying. They just wanted to listen to the beats. But, I got them to realize he was doing some thinking when he was writing. I think that was a critical turning point for some of them because they realized then that even Eminem was more than just style and flash…there was some substance to [his lyrics]…I kind of made it my mission to keep my thumb on what is reaching them every day because they're surrounded by it…They have the lyrics memorized…They know every single word…You've got to be able to use that. They have large sectors of their brain devoted to this stuff, so if you can tap into that, sneak a little education into it, it's kind of like a dog when they have to take medicine and you put in into ground beef or something. (Andrew)

Andrew's analogy of feeding medicine to a dog by putting it inside of ground beef is telling in that it reflects the necessity he feels to make English a culturally relevant subject for his students. By "sneaking" some principles of poetic analysis and explication into a lesson on an Eminem song, Andrew is starting with what the students know, indeed what they've internalized and memorized, to teach his poetry unit. He is connecting the subject matter to his students' lives and interests, and in doing so he is taking a risk by introducing popular culture about which his students are experts, not him. Callahan and Low (2004) suggest that this is "risky business" for a teacher—to walk into unknown territory in order to win the attention and engagement of students.

Callahan and Low (2004) ask, "Why interrupt the comfortable structures and hierarchies of the classroom?" (p. 55). They answer, "Because popular culture can become a site where the intersection of student and teacher expertise results in genuine dialogue..."(p. 55). And, as Andrew continues below, he clearly feels that using popular culture in his English classroom allows him not only to connect to his students but also to give them a reason to want to be in the classroom learning.

> ...They don't necessarily want to be [in school]. So, that's part of the big challenge, is getting them to want to be there...And, I think the subject matter allows you to connect things to their lives that you wouldn't necessarily be able to do with biology or chemistry or something like that. I mean, you can give them hands-on labs and things like that, but [it is not effective] until they can make connections to their own lives. It's a matter of keeping them engaged sometimes...(Andrew)

The risk that Andrew is taking by appropriating his students' culture to facilitate his teaching of poetry is indicative of how the subject matter is cooperating with his vision of himself as an English teacher. It is clear from Andrew's descriptions above that he is determined to teach poetry to his students, no matter how disinterested they seem. He realizes that he cannot simply open a textbook and read poetry with his students. Rather, he needs to "hook" them, to get them engaged. And so, although he is a 25-year-old White male who listens to country music, Andrew crossed over into his students' world to find that "hook," that ground beef into which he could hide "the medicine."

Barbara also provided a snapshot of how she connected the English curriculum to her tenth grade students' lives. In this excerpt, Barbara describes how she incorporated a tragedy within the school, something that was on her students' minds and

hearts at the time, to provide them access to Holden Caulfield's character in Catcher in the Rye.

> When you are educating, you need to tie it into real life...So that's the hardest thing...When you're teaching Catcher in the Rye, how do you tie a 1950's novel into real life?...Unfortunately we had a suicide in town at the time my class was reading [the novel]. A sixth grader...[who] had been kept back a couple of times, so he was around the age of my freshmen...And of course, the rumors start spreading through the school. So we talked about rumors and we talked about what's right and what's wrong with rumors. And then we talked about depression...And it really tied in well with my sophomores because they said, "You know, you really can't tell that Holden is depressed except he keeps saying 'I'm so depressed' and you just feel like he's so full of it." And I said "Well, let's list some things." We actually went to the Department of Mental Health [website] and looked up depression so that they could say, "Okay these are the indicators." And [the students] would say, "Oh yea, this is how Holden looks here. And these are the things that he does and he says." And it really tied into what was happening in their lives...(Barbara)

Barbara is able to create a series of connections in this one lesson she describes above. And, through these connections she is not only able to build strong bonds with her students, but she is also able to come alive as a teacher. There is no doubt in my mind that the excerpt above is a window into Barbara's good teaching. And, I believe, through the flexibility and possibility of the English language arts, Barbara is able to create her teaching self, to develop her teaching identity.

Some critics might look at these teachers' practices of appropriating popular culture and students' interests in order to teach English as "selling out" to the students. Some may even claim that these first-year teachers are connecting the curriculum to students' lives in order to be liked by their students. But, connecting school curricula to students' lives and cultures is not a trick or gimmick. It is, in fact, a teaching strategy that has proven its mettle, as it is a way for the teacher to help build a bridge between the students' culture and the culture of school. William Ayers (2001) recognizes the

importance of a teacher's responsibility to build bridges that connect student culture to school culture; he also recognizes that teachers have a responsibility to stay attuned to students' cultures, cultures that are dynamic, alive, and sometimes elusive.

> Bridge-building requires someone to lay the first plank…It seems clear enough to me that the teacher must be the architect and the contractor who begins to build the bridge. She must know the child in order to know where to put that first plank. She must also know the world, have a broad sense of where the bridge is headed, and have confidence that she and the students together can get there…Effective teachers must learn to be life-long students of culture. (Ayers, 2001, p. 75)

In light of Ayers' quote, it is interesting to note that Ian, a 50-year-old entrant into teaching, felt that his age complicated his ability to connect with students on a cultural level.

> …So I think one of my problems [that] obviously a younger teacher wouldn't have is just overcoming the barrier of age between me and my students. I feel that it's not impossible…I've been reasonably successful. It's something that I'm conscious of in the classroom…But I think that younger teachers have that advantage over me. They're more in touch with the students' mentality, the students' way of being, the students' existence, [and] I'm more into the literature end of stuff. So, I have to figure out strategies to get the students to view the literature either in a way that we can meet on or else I give up. (Ian)

The distress that Ian displays at the end of this excerpt above represents the cultural challenge that teachers of all ages face. For, as teachers get older, their students stay the same age, and popular cultures continue to change. This is another layer of complexity in the role of the teacher: staying current and connected to students' culture in order to make available more avenues for connecting with students.

Also interesting is the way in which first-year teachers are able to flex and adapt their curricula and their knowledge of English language arts content to meet their students halfway, so to speak. The cultural insight and curricular flexibility shown

above by Tori, Rebecca, Sarah, Andrew, and Barbara seems to contradict those who categorize novice teachers as "relatively inflexible" and as teachers who tend to "conform to whatever rules and procedures they were told to follow" (Berliner, 1988, p. 2). Instead, what I see in the teaching practices described above is these teachers' abilities to "think outside the box" of traditional teaching methods in order to be more effective in the classroom and, ultimately, in order to nurture their students' learning. In addition, connecting to students through writing, through discussion, and through popular culture, as we have seen, allows these beginning teachers to see what is possible in an English classroom; it allows them the creative flexibility to experiment with their developing teaching identities.

Developing a Critical Stance in English Class

Some of the teacher participants discussed ways in which their teaching of English allowed them to foster a critical and questioning stance in their classrooms. To these first-year teachers—Cathy, Valerie, and Tori—developing critical thinking skills in their students was an important element of their teaching identities. In the excerpts that follow, all three teachers emphasize the importance of critical thinking to their teaching philosophies and to their classroom practice.

The interpretive and analytic nature of most middle and high school English language arts curricula affords teachers the opportunity to promote a questioning stance in their classrooms. And, this questioning stance, or critical stance, often meshed with teachers' visions of what an English classroom should look like and how it should function. Even in a middle school classroom, amidst teaching life skills and social

skills, Cathy was intent on encouraging her students to question their assumptions, to form logical arguments, and to take positions on issues that did not necessarily conform to the teacher's position.

In the following passages, Cathy, Valerie, and Tori each express how and why they focus on building their students' critical thinking skills in the English classroom. In each case, the teachers hope that the critical stance they encourage inside the classroom will be used by students outside of the classroom to make sound decisions, to critically interpret the world around them, and to form logical arguments about pertinent social issues.

> [I teach my students] to think critically and ask questions about things …I like to drop questions that are really provoking…I do that in a number of ways [through] essay writing and asking questions, discussion, picking texts that are going to stimulate some kind of thought. For instance, I can give you an example of one text that we read during the recent war in Iraq…I wanted to model support for our country, and in the other sense, I wanted [students] to think very critically about [the war]. So, I picked a story called "Stop the Sun", by Derek Baldwin…It's about this man who had what they called…Vietnam Syndrome, post traumatic stress syndrome. And he had a son, and the little boy couldn't understand why at dinner the father's eyes went away…One day the son decided to ask him what happened, and he found out that…when [his father] was in the war, his platoon was attacked, and he pulled the body of his best friend over him to hide from the Viet Cong. And,[my students] were just shocked at that point. That was what war was about…I just wanted them to consider what the implications of war could possibly be. So, we had this discussion afterwards and a lot of my students were just sort of in shock after reading this piece. And…that opened a space to talk a little bit more about, "Okay, what is this thing that we call war? What is the reality of that because it's maybe not what we're seeing on television?"…So, yeah, I want my students to think critically constantly. And that is very uncomfortable for them. (Cathy)

It is clear from the final sentence of this passage that Cathy realizes she is sometimes pushing her students into spaces where they do not necessarily want to go. Some might argue that she's ruining their innocence; others might argue that she

opening their eyes. It is important to note that Cathy decided to teach "Stop the Sun" only after she had heard some of her students expressing their excitement about the impending war in Iraq. So, as was her protocol all year long, she planned her English language arts curriculum (the story was part of the students' textbook) in conjunction with her emphasis on critical thinking skills. Cathy is doing what she can to provide her students access to alternative viewpoints, perspectives, stories, and options, so that they have the tools with which to analyze what's before them. As another example of how important critical thinking is to Cathy, she explains,

> Just watching the news at night…supposedly it's objective…but I feel like it's so important to be critical and to ask questions…and to consider different possibilities, "Is this necessarily the case? Or could it be something else? (Cathy)

It seems clear from Cathy's excerpts above that teaching critical thinking skills to her middle school students is a very important component of who she is and strives to be as an English teacher. We can see, then, how her teaching of English language arts is an important part of her teacher development. When Cathy overheard some of her students enthusiastically talking about the impending war in Iraq, she could have ignored it. Instead, she intervened by teaching "Stop the Sun." This curricular choice, and the discussion that followed, was risky for a novice teacher, and yet Cathy took the risk in order to stay true to the ideal of who she wants to be in the classroom.

Recently, Nel Noddings (2004) emphasized the importance of teaching our students authentic, critical thinking skills through classroom examinations of difficult issues, such as war, religion, and parenting. Noddings (2004) raised concerns that teachers are frequently forbidden, by their administrators, parents or school committees, to avoid discussing such controversial issues with students. This, she says, is ironic

given that fostering critical thinking is often stated as a fundamental aim of education. As we saw in Cathy's excerpt above, though, there are teachers who push students to critically consider uncomfortable topics such as the horrors and realities of war. Not only is Cathy's critical teaching practice significant because she is a novice teacher, but according to Noddings (2004), it is significant because she is refusing to engage in the contradictory message of schooling,

> …The failure to confront issues critical to the present lives of students when we seek to teach critical thought send a contradictory message: think critically—but not about really controversial issues! Or do it on your own time! (p. 489)

It is important to note that Cathy, it seems to me, is foregrounding her commitment to teaching critical thinking skills while sacrificing, so to speak, a sense of connectedness with her students. Cathy describes her experience teaching "Stop the Sun" as "very uncomfortable" for her students. And, during my second interview with Cathy, she talked about her relationships with her students, and she was very candid about the fact that she erred on the side of caution and kept a professional distance between herself and her students. In a sense, "building bridges" through the language arts in her classroom came second or third to developing her students' critical stance. One is not exclusive of the other; however, Cathy indicates that she focused on one classroom philosophy, one aspect of her teaching identity, over the other. Cathy describes how painful it was to sacrifice closeness with her students in hopes of fostering a more serious work ethic in the classroom. She explains below,

> …It's hard when you walk by someone else's classroom and your students are in there and they're hanging out with this other teacher and bonding with them, or they're asking the other teacher, "Oh Miss So-and-so, would you do this?" Or "Sign my yearbook." Or, "Here's a Christmas gift." And, here I am. I got nothing. (Cathy)

For Cathy, it was important to develop her identity as a professional, serious teacher, an identity that could be further fostered by enacting her vision of "constant" critical thinking in her classroom.

Here, Valerie expresses her belief that critical thinking and analytical skills are a necessary part of the English curriculum.

> The most important thing that I hoped to bring to my students is this desire to learn more and to know that there is so much more out there that you don't know…And the more you question, the more you are curious about your surroundings in the world…the more you're going to know and the less ignorant you are to the things that are happening…I believe that you should be able to read critically and kind of think things out…the whole goal is to get kids to think for themselves. (Valerie)

Valerie goes on to give an example of how a student's television viewing was disrupted by an English lesson on allusion and stereotypes in cartoons.

> One of my students [said], "I hate it when you were teaching us allusion because every time I watch TV now, like all I see is allusion, allusion, allusion"…I loved the fact that I disrupted her TV viewing. I like the fact that both Trevor, my teaching partner, and I have talked to them about various cartoons and how they have racist depictions and characters and things like that. And I have tons of students who always come [to me] and say, "I cannot believe you've totally ruined Saturday morning cartoons for me." (Valerie)

This small "disruption" of the student's reality is indicative of Valerie's imperative to teach her students to "read critically." By using television as a vehicle to teaching literary allusion and cultural stereotypes, Valerie has opened up a new reality for her students. No longer can her students watch television or Saturday morning cartoons under the guise of ignorance.

The complexity of teaching students to develop a critical stance is evident in Valerie's recollection above. Although Valerie loves the fact that she "disrupted" her students' television viewing, it is not clear that the students appreciated this new critical

lens. Similarly, though Cathy intended to provide her eighth grade students a wider perspective of war through teaching "Stop the Sun," it is not clear that her students appreciated their new perspective of the horrors of war. And, some might argue, eighth graders are not yet mature enough to fully understand the usefulness of developing a critical stance when it comes to national policy or political viewpoints. This intersection of a teacher's agenda and students' readiness for that agenda is a real dilemma here.

For, if a teacher pushes her agenda on her students, the classroom becomes less democratic and more autocratic, even though these teachers, Cathy and Valerie, are truly attempting to show their students more than one side of the story. The delicate balance here lies in the context. A teacher's ability to "read" her students and her students' community is key; only by knowing how far or how little one can push the envelope will a teacher be able to successfully teach her students to develop a critical eye when watching television, when reading the newspaper, and when reading literature in English class.

So, unlike the conventional view of first-year teachers floundering and struggling with new curriculum and unruly students, these first-year teachers are tackling some serious, complicated issues in their English classrooms. They are taking risks in their teaching and in their visions of themselves as teachers. Pushing against the status quo in a public school in never an easy position, especially for a novice teacher. And yet, we can see, through these excerpts, how these novice teachers are able to develop as teachers through teaching English as a critical stance. Cathy and Valerie are foregrounding their teaching with their vision of an English language arts classroom as a place where students are pushed to think critically constantly. Cathy and Valerie's

emphasis on critical thinking, their visions of developing their students' critical consciousness, illustrates how first year teachers' identities are negotiated in the classroom, how novices come to understand themselves in their new professional role.

Valerie's statement above, that the "whole goal is to get kids to think for themselves," is a goal that Tori shares in her teaching practice as well. For Tori, who teaches in an urban high school with a large African-American population, getting her students to think for themselves is partly about her ability as a teacher to connect what they are reading with her students lives. As Tori expresses below, using multicultural literature in her classroom, in a departure from the traditional canon, is a way to access where her students come from—what they recognize and know as their reality—in order to push them to critically think for themselves.

> I'm drawn to certain texts that are multicultural, and it's easier for my kids to access. I can see how some teachers would feel that I'm doing them a disservice because the world is not just about Black people…But [I feel I am] starting at where they come from and trying to move them a little bit further. I think they're so used to being told what to do, and not so much taught how to think for themselves. (Tori)

Tori's emphasis on connecting the literature she teaches to her students' experiences in an effort to get them to think critically about their own realities is indicative of her commitment to fostering critical thinking. We should also recall that Tori consciously tried to "build bridges" in her classroom through English language arts, as we saw from the previous section, in her interview excerpt about her students writing and sharing "scar stories." Tori demonstrated, in our interviews, an effort to make her classroom both a comfortable and uncomfortable environment for her students. That is, she wanted to foster ideals of community and connectedness through personal writing, sharing, and discussion. She also pushed her students, through critical

examination of "real world" issues and through challenging texts, to develop a critical stance in the classroom, a stance that is sometimes uncomfortable and risky. In coming to better understand her teaching identity and her role as a teacher, Tori is experimenting in a number of ways with classroom practices and philosophies that are true to her ideals.

These stories of critical teaching from Cathy, Valerie, and Tori remind me of the nature of the "unquiet pedagogy" encouraged by Kutz and Roskelly (1991). In the preface to their book, they write about the multiple, varied conversations that occurred long before they started to write the book. In perhaps the most important conversations, those with Paulo Freire and their colleagues at the University of Massachusetts Boston, they write:

> We talked of the need for teaching that encourages both teachers and learners to ask questions and examine everything critically, and of the need for learning that connects with students' real lives and builds on their social experience. (p. xi)

Questioning critically, connecting curricula to students' lives, connecting with students—these characteristics of "unquiet" teaching can be seen in the interview excerpts above. It is hopeful and inspiring, I should think, to know that such connected, critical teaching is taking place in the classrooms of our newest teachers. For me, this further shows how deficit-heavy depictions of floundering beginning teachers present only half-truths. There is exciting, engaging, and risky teaching happening in the classrooms of these first-year teachers. And, by taking risks in their teaching (sometimes succeeding, sometimes failing), these novice teachers are productively grappling with the disequilibrium of the first year and are growing into their own as teachers.

High-Stakes Teaching of English

We saw in the previous two sections many of the first-year teachers experimenting with curricula, "the medium," in order to develop classroom practices that were in concordance with their teaching beliefs and identities. In this section we will see beginning teachers' experiences with high-stakes, standardized testing in English language arts. The four teachers featured in this section all worked in schools that had test preparation curricula. And, these four teachers, to some degree, each acquiesced to their school or district's mandated test preparation curricula by incorporating these curricula into their classroom routines and yearlong plans.

Test preparation can work to negatively, or unproductively, affect the growth of novice teachers in that standardized tests force teachers to comply. Because of the high stakes nature of the MCAS and ELA exams, my teacher participants were not willing to risk their reputations or their students' scores for a philosophical difference. So, they taught test preparation, through essay structure, test taking strategies, and some "drill and skill" exercises. As novice teachers who did not want to fail or disappoint their peers, my participants were willing to contradict their beliefs about good teaching to acquiesce to their schools' test preparation curricula or protocol. As novices, they did not have enough experience within the system, or enough experience to incorporate test preparation into their yearlong curricula, to do anything but acquiesce or adapt.

Though I was a high school English teacher for five years, my public school teaching career ended just as the standardized testing movement was gaining steam. So, I never experienced what it was like to be under the gun as an English teacher preparing students for high-stakes English language arts tests. An interesting, and unexpected,

finding with this group of ten first-year English teachers is that four had been assigned to teach classes in the eighth or tenth grades, grades in which their students would be expected to take (and perform well on) their state's mandatory, standardized competency exam.

This reality is unfortunate, for requiring new teachers to adhere to a test preparation regimen would seem to push new teachers to develop in a different way. As we shall see in the following excerpts, Tori, Meredith, and Barbara imaginatively found ways to prepare their students for the exam and to incorporate test preparation into their regular curricula. But, each expressed dismay at having to add this additional layer to their first-year teaching experience. The three teachers quoted below all taught in Massachusetts and had to prepare their students for the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), which in the cases below, tests tenth grade students on writing, reading comprehension, interpretation, analysis, and grammar and usage.

> ...We teach double blocks, so one block every other week is dedicated to MCAS class...So we bought these MCAS books...We were doing MCAS strategies and that was a super letdown...And then I did, which I'm kind of proud of...a readers cycle on MCAS texts. So, a month before the MCAS... I changed it up a bit...I'd give them a new text everyday, and we'd break it down in Socratic form...And then I would give them MCAS questions that went with the text to see how they would do with an open response. And then they would do one assignment for homework...Who knows what text is going to be in front of them [on the day of the test]...I'm not going to take the test for them. (Tori)

It is clear that Tori, though mandated to teach MCAS class every other week, was actively experimenting with test preparation forms and exercises. She admitted to me that because she disagreed with the required MCAS class, she rebelled for a while at the beginning of the year and turned the class every other week into "poetry class." But as the year went on and as she developed a good working relationship with her mentor,

the literacy coach in the school, Tori learned different ways that she could structure the MCAS class so that is wasn't necessarily skill and drill every week.

Meredith's tack with MCAS preparation was a bit different. Although she was given the MCAS test prep books at the beginning of the year by her principal, she was never at a place in her teaching where she could realistically incorporate the test prep into her regular curriculum. Or, she didn't want to incorporate it into her curriculum. Whatever the case, Meredith found herself cramming her students with a strategy for the long composition two weeks before the test administration.

> …Here I am trying to throw together lessons on a daily basis let alone prep an MCAS book…So, I didn't touch my MCAS materials until about a month before the MCAS when I started to feel the crunch, "Oh my God, my kids are going to take this test" and, "Oh my God, I have 87 sophomores and if the class fails they're going to look at me"…So what I did was I got a writing formula from one of the junior high school teachers called IDEEER: identify, define, examples, evidence, events…and restate your main idea. So…we built our long composition organization based on IDEEER…I started two weeks before [the test] and I drilled it. We did two weeks straight of writing, and then I guess this year's long composition question was ridiculously easy…So my kids came out of [the test] and said, "That was so easy"…which made me happy…I got no direction on how to [teach writing for] MCAS. I got no description from my administration or my department head…I was mad because what are they doing, giving a first year teacher 87 college prep sophomores?…The numbers for MCAS performance…they get printed in the paper and compared to other cities and you're giving… the majority of [the sophomores] to me? (Meredith)

Meredith clearly felt anxious and angry about the fact that she was teaching the largest number of sophomores in her English department and about the fact that she did not receive any MCAS guidance from her English department. This seems a huge oversight on the part of her department chair; I almost get the feeling that, as a department, they were not invested in the seriousness of MCAS preparation. And, Meredith surely felt that all eyes of parents, teachers and administrators would be on her

and her students as the test scores came back. Unfortunately, no one in her department or school attempted to quell her fears.

Conversely, although Barbara, too, had to prepare her sophomores for MCAS, her colleagues in the English department were quick to point out that the students' performance on the English portion of the MCAS was in no way a reflection of her teaching abilities. It should also be noted that, in contrast to Tori and Meredith's experiences, Barbara was teaching in one of the wealthiest school districts in Massachusetts, where test scores are above average and where there is very little pressure put on teachers in regards to MCAS. Therefore, Barbara was able to be a bit more relaxed and integrated with her test preparation methods because the district was not in crisis mode due to lagging test scores.

> …The wisest thing that one of the English teachers [said was], "You're not afraid that if they do badly on MCAS that it reflects on you?" I said, "Well, I was." [And she said], "It has nothing to do with you. You've given them all of the things they need. If they can't pass it, that's not your problem." And I thought, "It is my problem. Because they are my students." (Barbara)

Unlike Tori, Meredith, and Barbara, Cathy teaches in a middle school in New York State. As an eighth grade teacher, Cathy was shouldered with preparing her students for the New York State English language arts competency exam (ELA), which she describes below. And similar to Barbara, Cathy's curriculum, a district-mandated curriculum, had already been infused with the necessary test preparation skills and content.

> …Our curriculum was organized around this test…I kind of wish that it wasn't like that…[On the test] there are three passages with reading comprehension multiple choice questions, then there is a listening portion, where the kids listen to a piece of literature and then have to write an essay and answer a question, and then they have a piece of literature that

> they read, answer short questions about, and then write an essay. So, they end up writing two essays and reading three different passages and answering, I think it's close to 50 questions…(Cathy)

Like Meredith, Cathy made time two weeks or so before the test administration to do what she refers to as "direct instruction" in test-taking strategies. Although she genuinely wanted to prepare her students for the test, it is clear from the final sentence of the excerpt below that Cathy would rather have been teaching her regular literacy curriculum.

> …When it came time for the test, about two and a half weeks before the test…what happened was we did direct instruction of how to take this test. And I showed kids a number of different strategies…and the way I justified it to them was I said, "Okay, you're going to take a lot of tests in your life. And let me show you some strategies for taking this." I said, "Everyone in this room has the skill of being able to write an essay and being able to read and understand the information, but taking a test is a very special occasion, and it's different than some of the things that we do in here, and let me show you some strategies for doing that."…We talked about how every question asked requests information. And, how can you go find that information in a text, and what is that question asking for, and we did all kinds of things like that…And right after the test a lot of the kids were saying, "Well, I know I'm a much better test taker now." But at the same time I thought, "Well, I'm glad they're learning strategies for taking tests, but I really want them to build their literacy skills…" (Cathy)

Finally, Cathy exhibits a mix of pride and empathy for her students, as she reflects on how demanding the weeks leading up to the test were. While Tori, Meredith, and Barbara had not received their students' test scores at the time of my interviews with them, Cathy was able to see the fruits of her labor when her students' test scores came back at the end of the year. But again, in discussing the school's much-improved test scores, she exhibits a mix of pride and skepticism. Though some would see the improved test scores and quickly make a judgment about the effectiveness of Cathy's

teaching, she is not so quick to make this leap. She seems to be questioning whether improved test scores are an indicator of a successful and effective first year of teaching.

> ... I definitely think I pushed my kids...I was requesting a lot from them and really wanting them to work hard...And I told the kids, [that] afterwards we would do stuff where they would have more time to think and process information...They really did rise to the standard that we set for them...Scores went up at least ten percent this year...And, that was the first time ever in the district and the funny thing is...our school was the only school that had scores go up...I'm happy about that...it's good sign...it definitely came at a time where I felt like, "Am I making a difference in these kids lives at all?" And I thought, "Well, okay, New York State says yes." But, at the same time, it's like, "Okay, it's a test, and it's not the end all be all." (Cathy)

In these excerpts from four first-year teachers who were saddled with the responsibility of preparing their students for high stakes tests, we can see bits of teachers' "acquiescence" and "accommodation" to the school or district curricula (Smagorinsky et al, 2002, 201). Smagorinsky, Lakly, and Johnson (2002) found, in their study of a first-year English teacher, that beginning teachers necessarily experience bouts of acquiescence and accommodation as their ideals come into conflict with the reality of schools. The reality of high stakes testing in the English language arts, and the required test preparation curricula, seems to be the site of these teacher participants' experiences with acquiescing to or accommodating the mandated curriculum. When Cathy states, "Our curriculum was organized around the test...I kind of wish it wasn't like that" or when Tori states, "We were doing MCAS strategies, and that was a super letdown," we can hear disappointment and accommodation in their voices. They don't want to fail; they are first-year teachers. And yet, it also seems they want to resist the standardized test preparation. Because they had no choice in preparing students for state

standardized tests, these four first-year teachers had to comply with, or acquiesce to, the test preparation curriculum.

For these teachers, compromising their ideals to accommodate the realities of schools partly involved compromising who they wanted to be as English teachers. Compared to the teaching these novice teachers discussed in the previous two sections, the teaching they discuss here—high stakes test preparation—is constricting and prescribed. This type of teaching, and this type of pressure, no doubt affected these four teachers' development as teacher of English language arts. Probably more than the other six teachers in the study, these four were, in a sense, hazed into the arena of high stakes testing. Although they met the challenge, I have no doubt that their idealistic visions of themselves as teachers were disrupted by the realities of standardized testing and its accompanying culture of punitive pressure.

An interesting connection can be made between these first-year teachers' developing identities as teachers and English language arts as the vehicle that enabled them to enact their vision of what teaching and learning should be. For most of these ten teachers, teaching English language arts seemed to be a natural conduit to connecting with their students. Many of them attributed writing projects, journals, or literary discussions to helping to connect the lives and minds of the classroom community. And, these ten teachers established positive relationships with their students, relationships that provided intrinsic rewards, through the teaching of English language arts. By using reading and writing to "build bridges" in the classroom, by developing their students' critical stances, and by preparing their students for high stakes, standardized tests, these first-year teachers' developing identities were informed and formed by the English

language arts. In each section, we saw how their subject matter and curriculum either cooperated with or contradicted their visions of themselves as English teachers.

In the next chapter, I will explore how these ten teachers experienced their first year within the context of their schools. Once teachers step outside of their classroom, there is an entire school culture to contend with, a culture that is most often arranged in accordance with a top-down hierarchy, from principal to department chair to veteran faculty to, finally, the new teacher.

CHAPTER 6

MEMBERS ONLY: FINDING ONE'S PLACE IN THE HIERARCHICAL POWER STRUCTURES OF SCHOOLS

Teachers have to contend with many complex struggles and transformations during their first year. They have to struggle internally with the self, in their efforts to craft a public persona that is both nurturing and authoritative. On another front, they struggle with their subject matter, in this case English language arts, as they make the transition from student of English to teacher of English. Yet, the sites of these struggles—the self and the subject matter—tend to be relatively flexible and malleable, allowing teachers to learn, usually through trial and error, to mold themselves and their teaching of English into a vision of "English teacher" that suits them. But, the site of another struggle for first-year teachers, the school, is unlike the others in that it tends to be inflexible and burdened by its history as a top-down, hierarchical organization.

When first-year teachers are socialized, or "inducted," into their schools, there is little doubt that they recognize, probably from the very first day of school, the power structures that are in place. Schools, like most organizations, have bosses: the principals. And, like most businesses, they have middle managers: the assistant principals, the department chairs, and the deans. Below the management, there are the mentors, coaches, and veteran teachers. And, usually at the very bottom of the hierarchy are the newest teachers. Sarason (1996) also compares the hierarchical power structures of schools to private-sector organizations, and points out that "professional relationships [in schools] are largely determined and shaped by the fact that power is unequally distributed" (p. 332).

This unequal power distribution in most public schools often means that novice teachers enter their first teaching placements with very little power, which becomes evident to them when they realize they were assigned the classes no one else wanted, the room with no windows, or the most preparations of any teacher in their department. This type of "hazing" of new teachers by others with more power has become commonplace, and, unfortunately, remains uncontested in teacher education, namely by our haphazard use of the term "induction" to represent this phase in a teacher's career.

The word "induction" brings to mind fraternities, sororities, the military, and, perhaps, an honor society or civic club. We often refer to one's entrance into these organizations as "induction" mainly because we expect that, upon entering, say, the Army, one goes through a process of initiation, during which time one learns to conform to the norms and behaviors that are accepted in the Army. So, when we refer to a new teacher's entrance into teaching as "induction," on some level we may be validating the fact that the new teacher, full of idealism and optimism and new ideas, must eventually come around and conform to the accepted attitudes and behaviors of his or her school.

In this way, entering teaching becomes similar to entering other clubs or organizations. The veteran members of the club decide, on some level, whether or not the initiate is worthy of joining or staying. If they deem her worthy, chances are they treat her well and support her development as a new member. If they deem her not worthy, it may be because they sense a lack of commitment from the new teacher, because of the new teacher's outsider status, or because of a generational or cultural gap that hinders any camaraderie or collegiality. This analogy, I believe, holds up in the

comparison to teaching. And, this is why educators at all levels should be questioning the ways in which new teachers are brought into, or "inducted," into schools and the ways that veteran faculty and administrators treat the newest among them.

As I have pointed out, the process of "inducting" new teachers into a school is a tricky one; it is a process that must strike a balance between acclimating new teachers to the attitudes and norms of the school while also providing the new teacher enough pedagogical support and freedom to discover his or her teaching self. Induction is also a risky process. If new teachers do not have the freedom, within their schools, to become who they want to become as teachers, they may leave the school, leave teaching, or even worse, stay in teaching as a compromised soul.

In the next sections, we will return to the experiences of ten, first-year English teachers as they try to find a place for themselves amidst the hierarchy and power structures of their schools.

Administrators' Impact on First-Year Teachers

Principals

As the leader of the school, the principal, historically the "principal teacher," plays a central role in setting the accepted attitudes and norms of his or her school. As McLaughlin & Talbert (2001) assert,

> For better or worse, principals set conditions for teacher community by the ways in which they manage school resources, relate to teachers and students, support or inhibit social interaction and leadership in the faculty, respond to the broader policy context, and bring resources into the school. (p. 98)

The ten teachers I interviewed found their administrators' impact on their first-year of teaching to be a mixed bag. Some encountered principals who made all the difference in their first year of teaching—principals who were empathetic to the first-year teachers' experience; principals who were supportive and actively designed and supported structures within the school that allowed new teachers to feel accepted as true professionals. Others encountered principals who were disconnected, inconsistent, and unsupportive, characteristics that directly affected first-year teachers' experiences in their schools.

In the interview excerpt below, Cathy explains how her principal was supportive, both emotionally and pedagogically.

> …My principal was so helpful to me…from the very beginning. I remember the first couple months of school I was just really emotional and just learning to do well, and I remember he pulled me into the office and was like, "Don't worry. You're doing fine." Little things like that he would help me with. And he always supported me with any student interaction that I had or a decision I made in my classroom. He was very supportive of that. But he also provided me with some feedback on ways to improve my teaching when he came in and observed me teach…So he's been able to help me in a number of different ways. (Cathy)

Ian's principal was also supportive, but in a decidedly different way.

> …After a while the principal and I had a pretty good relationship…One time I had a meeting with the principal and a parent because the parent was concerned about the content of one of the courses [I was teaching]. It was a media course, and she felt her child was not learning what she should be learning in media. But I was pretty much following, from what I could surmise, what the previous teacher used…And, so the principal was amazing in how she handled this mother who came in. It was just fascinating to kind of observe her. (Ian)

Finally, Tori's principal was very familiar with Tori's struggles as a first-year teacher and offered various kinds of support.

> ...I think I was very fortunate because my principal has a daughter who is a first-year teacher, and she was close to my age. [So,] she was very sympathetic towards us, that we were struggling with these issues...What I loved about her was...when I needed it, she gave me very concrete things to do in my classroom to take care of specific situations. And she knew my kids well enough to be like, "This is how you handle this situation. We dealt with it last year. This is how you do it." And, I felt very comfortable coming to her and being like, "I'm having these problems in my classroom." It's not like she's out to get me or anything because she said herself, "We have to treat our teachers like we treat our students. And, they make mistakes. They're human, and we're here to help them." (Tori)

We can see from these excerpts that the ways in which principals lent their support to first-year teachers varied. For Cathy and Tori, it was significant that their principals recognized the personal and professional challenges that a new teacher experiences. Cathy's principal offered kind, supportive words at the right moments, and Tori's principal was sympathetic towards her first-year teachers' struggles.

Ian, however, experienced a sort of solidarity with his principal, and tells a story about his principal, in effect, rescuing him from an unsatisfied parent. Because Ian's first year of teaching was as a long-term substitute teacher, and because he was temporarily filling someone else's shoes, it is understandable how this show of solidarity by the principal made Ian feel as though he was being drawn into the fold of the school. In these three excerpts, we are able to "see" principals who seem to respect their positions of power over these three first-year teachers. It is interesting to note the blend of professional and personal support that they offered their new teachers; these principals were kind and sympathetic but also offered the new teachers concrete, technical advice on how to improve their teaching—the logical role for the "principal teacher."

Two of the other teachers I interviewed described ways in which they found their principals to be unhelpful and unsupportive. Sarah explains,

> …last Thursday I had a scheduled drama rehearsal and there was a teachers' meeting. And, instead of the principal telling me that I couldn't keep the kids, he took it upon himself to tell them all to leave at our meeting, before I got there. So when I got there, [the students] were already gone…I looked at him, and I was like "I wanted to meet with them for five minutes to go over what needs to be done for tomorrow, and then I was going to come down to the meeting." And he was just like "Well, I already sent them home."(Sarah)

Like Sarah's principal, Meredith's principal seemed to relish his position at the top of the school hierarchy, as she explains below.

> …The principal, all he wants to hear from you is 'Yes.' "I understand what you're saying. I'll do that." That's all he wants to hear. Don't argue with him. Do not second guess him. And I learned that right up front…If you argue, if he suggests that you did something and you didn't do it…don't argue with him. (Meredith)

Whereas Cathy, Tori, and Ian all expressed a sort of simpatico with their principals, Sarah and Meredith's principals are more authoritarian in their behaviors. Rather than supporting Sarah's role as drama advisor and director of the after school theater program (an unpaid position), Sarah's principal sent her drama students home without consulting her; he effectively overrides her authority as a first-year teacher and, in a way, reprimands her for trying to meet with her students before a scheduled teachers' meeting. Similarly, Meredith understands her principal to be someone with whom she needs to agree in order to stay on his good side. Her principal seems to take advantage of his position of power over his teachers, and, as a result, is not willing to negotiate or discuss issues with them, once he has made his decision.

Sarah and Meredith's experiences with their principals are drastically different than Cathy, Tori, and Ian's. I have no doubt that a kind, supportive principal can make

all the difference in the professional life and development of a first-year teacher. But, as Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) point out, "principals have no monopoly on wisdom" (p. 89). In the case of Sarah and Meredith's principals, it would seem that they do have a monopoly on wisdom, procedure, and decisions within a school. These two principals were not interested in negotiation, discussion, or, in Sarah's case, reasonableness. They were more interested in protecting their seat of power and their autonomous decision making processes. Cathy, Tori, and Ian's principals, though, seem to all understand the nature of collaboration and the imperative for new teacher support. All three of them seem to understand that "collaboration should mean creating the vision together, not complying with the principal's own" (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991, p. 91). So, some of the principals described above were "bosses" in the traditional sense, while others were collaborators.

From what I know from reading and from completing these interviews, the predominant model of the principal is one who is a top-down boss. And yet, as schools attempt to change to become more collaborative organizations, with shared decision-making and leadership, the principals who reject the status quo, those who are more collaborative and supportive, work to set good examples in their organizations. In contrast, I believe that principals who support the status quo, those who use and perhaps abuse their positions of power to mete out autocratic orders and actions, are setting poor examples for our newest teachers.

English Department Chairs

Interestingly, these teachers' talked much more at length about their English department chairs, for better or worse, than about their principals. As newly appointed members of English departments in high schools and middle schools, these first-year teachers had much more interaction with and exposure to the behaviors and beliefs of their department chairs, to whom they looked as leaders and as colleagues. While the literature tells us little about the role the department chair plays in inducting new teachers into schools, we do know that subject area domains "operate as an important context for teaching" (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001, p. 57). Thus, it would follow that the appointed leader of the English domain, the English department chairperson, would operate as an important variable in the first-year teacher's entrance into the English department.

So, it is interesting to note that none of the ten teachers I interviewed spoke highly of their English department chairs. Three of the teachers interviewed, Sarah, Andrew, and Tori, spoke at length about the inflexible, unfriendly, and unproductive modes of operation of their department heads. Sarah explains below:

> ...The third week of school, my department head came in and gave me a surprise observation. She just showed up one morning...and I had my desks in kind of a U because I like to use the overhead a lot. And, it was just the easiest formation for it, and my class was a little hectic, but I didn't feel like they were running the show or anything...So afterward, we had a post conference, and so [my department head] said to me, "You have to put your desks in rows." ...And I said to her, "Well, it's a really small room, it is kind of really hard to get around. I feel that this was a good formation for what we are doing right now". And she was like "Well, it's not working". And, she was really upset with me to the point where she started to nitpick about things. (Sarah)

Andrew describes an even more difficult scene with his English department chair.

> …The first day I met [my English department chair] was the first day of school. And, he stopped me in the hallway as I was going to my class…and says to me, "So, you must be the new guy." And we introduced ourselves, and he said, "Well, you weren't the one that I wanted to hire, but that's okay, we'll make due with what we've got here." And he started telling me this whole story about the kid that he had as a student teacher last year that he'd wanted to hire. I'm already late for class, and he's sitting here telling me this in the hallway the first day [of school]. And so by the time I got to class…I decided to just pretend it didn't happen, complete denial. That worked. It turns out that's the way you deal with this particular guy, as I came to learn from my coworkers. None of them are exactly enamored of him, and he tends to be mercurial with his relationships with them too, so I guess that was normal for him. (Andrew)

Finally, Tori explains the malaise of her English department facilitator.

> …We had a facilitator [in the English department meetings], and that was a huge mistake…because [the facilitator] was not really that dedicated to getting things done. I think he was really skeptical about the administration, and therefore we just didn't get things done. He didn't believe in whatever assignments we had to do [in our department]…Like, we had to write a term syllabus…And, he was just like, "This is a waste of your time. Let's just not do anything." (Tori)

The interactions that Sarah and Andrew had with their English department chairs during the first month of school in September were critical in forming their stances toward their department chairs, defensive and guarded stances that would remain throughout the school year. For Tori, the realization that her English department facilitator was impeding any progress in their department meetings was a crucial factor for her as she determined her "allies" in her department and in her school. As a first-year teacher who was intent on improving her practice, Tori was disillusioned by how overtly her department facilitator bucked the system, that is, how he would rather be unproductive during meetings than acquiesce to the assignments required by the administration or others higher up.

Although we are only seeing, or reading, one side of the story in these excerpts, we can dig a little deeper into the excerpts to better understand the complexities of each of these problematic situations. For example, I know Sarah fairly well, as we had known each other for a year before I asked her to participate in my study. And, she can have a difficult personality at times. She can be strong-willed and opinionated, and I have no doubt that, if pushed, she could stimulate a power struggle. So, when I read Sarah's excerpt above about her disagreement with her department chair, what I see at work is more than the hierarchical power structures in a school. I also see a clash of personalities, strong personalities, and a bit of defensiveness on Sarah's part. This begs the question: What is attributable to peoples' personalities and what is attributable to the structures of the school? Though I cannot answer my own question, with any certainty at least, for the three instances described above, I am sure that each delicate situation involved components of power, personality, and hierarchy.

If we look back and re-read Andrew's story of his initial encounter with his department chair, we can problematize that as well. For, what Andrew tells us in his excerpt is that his department chair wanted to hire someone else for Andrew's position. What Andrew doesn't tell us in the excerpt, but what I know from the interviews, is that Andrew was hired by the principal. And so, it is understandable that Andrew's department chair might harbor some resentment because he was overridden in a hiring decision in his own department. Unfortunately, he is taking out his frustrations on Andrew, who seems unaware of the power struggle in which he has been involved.

Similarly, Tori's department facilitator, who she says was "skeptical about the administration" is seemingly taking out his frustrations on his fellow English teachers,

all of whom seem incapable of questioning his authority or his decisions. It is important to keep these many variables in mind as we examine the intricate relationships of adults in a school. For, although I firmly believe that the hierarchical power structure has the potential to do great harm to a new teacher's sense of self and sense of professionalism, there are other factors at play any time we look closely at relationships within an organization.

Mentors' Influences on First-Year Teachers

As much as the administrators within a school have an influence on new teachers' entrance into teaching, these first-year teachers' experiences with their mentor teachers and colleagues proved to be much more frequent, and in turn much more significant, to their "induction" experience. Analyzing what these new teachers had to say about their mentors was an eye-opening experience for me. Going into this study, I expected to find what I had come to understand about formal mentoring in schools: that new teachers and mentors are seldom paired up thoughtfully and that new teachers usually abandon their official mentors for informal mentors. But, what I found was that five out of ten of these first-year teachers had positive experiences with their assigned mentor teachers.

> ...I basically wouldn't have gotten through the year without [my mentor teacher]. She's my sanity...She really helped me a lot with dealing with the paperwork...But, also dealing with the day-to-day stuff...the stuff you have to deal with. When this has to be in, when that has to be in, how to get around things, and how to deal with the department head and all that kind of stuff. She's been a really good friend for me so it's been really nice. And she's the kind of person that, we learn from each other, which is really good. I've given her suggestions for teaching things different ways, and she's been really good at telling me which way they want things done, how to play the game. (Sarah)

From Sarah's description of the role her mentor played in her first-year, it is clear that mentor teachers have a variety of roles to choose from. One would expect a mentor teacher to assist a novice teacher with pedagogy, to discuss curricular issues with novice teachers, and to help novices get a "lay of the land" in terms of school policies and expectations. It seems that Sarah's mentor, while she was a "really good friend" to Sarah, supported Sarah the most in her knowledge of procedures and policies within the school. As Sarah tells it, "dealing with the day-to-day stuff" and learning "how to play the game" were invaluable insights that she got from her mentor teacher. Sarah's experience makes apparent that, in addition to their pedagogical roles as experienced teachers, mentors also play a role in helping novices to form their attitudes toward school culture and established norms. These attitudes are an important aspect of new teachers' professional identities.

For Sarah, who was lucky enough to have her mentor, an English teacher, on her middle school team, the other members of her team played less of a role. Part of the struggle for Sarah was the "native culture" of her school, that is, many of the teachers in her school were people who had grown up in the neighborhood, attended the schools, gone off to college and then had come back as teachers. As she was not a native, and had moved to the city from out of state, she was an unknown commodity and had a hard time integrating herself into the culture of the school in this tight-knit urban community.

> ...There are five teachers on the team, there's a science, math, social studies, English and the writing teacher. The English teacher and I work hand in hand...She's my mentor, and our rooms are attached, so it's very easy for us to make our curriculums coincide with each other...I feel a closeness with my mentor...that I definitely don't feel with the rest of the group, and it's partly because we are outsiders. We did not grow up in

> Elmhurst, we did not live there. Our parents don't live there, and that kind of thing. But everyone else has. So we've kind of stuck together in that sense. (Sarah)

Cathy and Valerie's mentor teachers proved to be both personal and professional supports during their first year of teaching.

> ...Every first-year teacher [in my school] gets a mentor...And my mentor teacher was definitely someone who I constantly was in contact with. I am so thankful for her. Because even if it was in between class, and I had to ask her a quick question about something, I'd just run over there and she would be there ready to say, "Okay, you did this, yes, you did this right." Or "Don't worry about that." Or "Handle that this way."...She made all the difference in my first year...I'm very lucky that she was so responsive to me...There were a couple times when I felt like, "I can't do this. I can't do this." And she was there to say, "Don't worry. It will get better."...I just needed constant reassurance...Someone just to say, "You're okay!" It's like learning to ride a bike for the first time. And, the training wheels are off, and you're wobbling, and it's just nice to know that someone's behind you if you fall. (Cathy)

> ...My mentor teacher is a wonderful person. Any questions I have she's pretty much right on top of things if I want something or want to borrow stuff or whatever...[My mentor] has been a presence in my life and someone I enjoy and who I've had a lot of talks with...I'd tell her how frustrated I am, and she's like "Don't worry. Our first years, we all are kind of finding ourselves and finding our teaching styles"...So she's been good for that, and when I have my little breakdowns...making me see that it's not the end of the world. (Valerie)

While Cathy and Valerie's mentors focused their efforts on personally supporting their first-year teachers through the emotional struggles of teaching, Tori and Barbara's mentors, perhaps due to their respective roles as the literacy coach and the senior English teacher in the school, seemed to focus their mentoring efforts on issues of planning, curriculum, and pedagogy.

> ...I guess around two or three weeks into the school year the principal suggested that the literacy coach at my school be my mentor...[My mentor] was very good because she's very, very knowledgeable about adolescent literature...she had books and books and books of things that we could use, and off the top of her head she could name stories I could

> use for certain lessons. And so she really helped me organize my thoughts for the next day, and she was helping me when I was going day by day. Like, "Okay, now you've got this, let's go on to bigger planning." ...I saw my mentor every day, and we'd go into her office and plan, and she would stay late, and we discussed our days, and what we were doing the next day in our classrooms...I think she felt like it was a collaborative experience, and I really liked that because we would plan together, and she would let me do professional development presentations and stuff like that. (Tori)

> ...They did assign me a mentor, which was wonderful. She's been teaching there for twenty-four years and she said, "Don't worry if you don't teach all this now. Just don't worry about it. Teach what you know. Teach what you love and what you think the kids are going to love."...And she would sit in on some of my classes and give me really good constructive criticism. (Barbara)

These three distinct roles of mentor teachers—as guides into the professional culture of the school, as emotional cheerleaders, and as coaches for curriculum and instruction—raise questions about our expectations for mentor teachers. What role should they play in a new teacher's entrance into teaching? All five teachers cited above seemed to have had positive experiences with their mentors, and yet these positive experiences were carried out in different ways; each teacher's experience was rooted in her own individualized needs and context and the capabilities and limitations of the mentor teacher.

I have no doubt these five teachers' positive experiences with their mentor teachers contributed to the successes they felt in their first year of teaching. Yet, with the exception of Tori's mentor teacher (who was the school's literacy coach and thus did not have a full schedule of classes to teach), none of the other four teachers' experiences with their mentors seemed to go far beyond the "buddy system" version of mentoring that is so often criticized (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). A mentor is necessarily more than a buddy. A mentor, if we are to be true to the etymology of the word, is a

"wise and trusted counselor or teacher" (American Heritage Dictionary, 1996). Though Cathy cited her mentor as having some influence on her classroom curriculum and teaching methods, the mentors discussed above, for the most part, provided moral support and guidance to these new teachers during their first year, gifts that should not be discounted.

As Feiman-Nemser (2001) argues, though, caring and competent mentoring goes beyond this, as "well-prepared mentor teachers combine the knowledge and skills of a competent classroom teacher with the knowledge and skills of a teacher of teaching" (p. 1036). Feiman-Nemser (2001) also maintains that effective mentoring is only really possible when mentors have full-time release from their teaching duties. This, I think, is a goal to strive for. But, as schools are slowly undergoing change in the area of beginning teacher support, the five teachers' positive experiences with their mentors offer us progress in the right direction.

What happens when a teacher is not assigned a mentor? Although mentors are mandated for new teachers in both states where I interviewed, New York and Massachusetts, budget restrictions and unmotivated faculty often squelch a school's mentoring efforts. In the case of Andrew, as he explains below, no formal mentor was assigned to him, so his colleagues in the English department picked up the slack, offering their guidance and support to him as "informal" mentors.

> ...I don't have a mentor teacher. I have several of them, in fact, but only because I went out and asked, basically. That's what it is as a first-year teacher. You can either have a mentor assigned to you, that's one thing. But otherwise, you have to just kind of pick and choose who you think you're going to get along with, and who you can go to for advice. And, in that sense I think I've really been blessed with very open coworkers that way. I don't know if that's because they're all women or what. I don't want to make any stereotypes there, but [my colleagues in the English

> department] have really been very welcoming to me, and you know, there is maybe a little bit of a maternal thing there because some of them are old enough to be my mother…So, they want to see me succeed. And once I got that feeling, I knew that I was never going to go too far wrong during the year. (Andrew)

As we learned above, Andrew's experience with his English department chair was less than rewarding, and perhaps because of that, he took the initiative to connect early on with his colleagues in his department, as he knew that the appointed leader in his department would be of little help to him. Similar to Andrew's experience, Meredith found herself without a mentor teacher. Unfortunately, her English department chair was to be her de facto mentor, but he did not want to do it, as she describes below. Like Andrew, she was left to seek out on her own effective and like-minded mentor teachers.

> …Each [new] teacher is supposed to be paired with an experienced teacher within their department…Well, I didn't get a mentor. My department head didn't want to do it. He didn't want to commit to the meetings or the time…He talked to me the first day of school and he was like "Well, anything you need just ask." And I was like "Well what book do I start with?" And he took me to the classroom and he said, "This entire wall is for freshman. This wall is for sophomores." Laissez fair is the nice way of saying that John is relaxed. He's a year away from retirement and he's very cheerful and he's really into his job, but he's just so casual about it. As a new teacher I was completely befuddled…When I actually needed help and details and "How do I present this?" he was no help whatsoever. So, I'm glad he wasn't my mentor…(Meredith)

Ian's experience with his mentor was a bit different. As a long-term substitute during his first year of teaching, Andrew's status within his school was much more precarious than that of the other nine teachers in this study. And, it is important to recall that Ian is a 50-year-old, second-career teacher, a factor that may have influenced his relationships with his colleagues in his school. Unlike the other first-year teachers quoted above, Ian did not seem to rely upon his mentor teacher for personal or emotional support. Rather, he looked to his mentor for guidance in curriculum and

pedagogy. But, when he discovered that their teaching philosophies differed greatly, he seemed to dismiss the role of his mentor because of her "drill sergeant" methods of teaching literature.

> ...I had a mentor teacher who taught ninth grade, and she tried to help me by providing me with... her lesson plans. The school had this sort of command culture for teaching ninth and tenth grade English...At least she did, which I wasn't really taken with. I mean, it seemed that she was kind of like a drill sergeant marching these students through the text for specific aims and specific purposes that had to do with facts in the text...I tried doing it her way but I couldn't...And, I discussed this a little with the principal and a little with my mentor teacher, but they were just into kind of marching the kids through the text. So, I tried doing that and I wasn't very good at it...it was just not my style. (Ian)

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the role of mentor in the hierarchy of the school is complicated. Though the mentor teacher is saddled with the responsibility of ushering a new teacher into the school culture, few mentor teachers receive any real status in the school through their positions as mentors. A mentor teacher is usually a teacher who has worked in the school for at least three years and, from what I can tell, mentor teachers are compensated very little, if at all, for the important job they perform. Generally, mentor teachers either volunteer to mentor a new teacher or are elected to do so by someone higher up, someone "giving the orders." And so, mentor teachers are in an unusual position in schools. They are not administrators and they are not necessarily veteran teachers with experiential status. They are kind of in the middle of the hierarchy, holding no real power other than that which they can choose to wield over or share with their apprentice. Because of their "middle" position in the hierarchy of schools, what we see from the above excerpts is a kind of "middle" experience with mentor teachers. It's a grab bag. Some take their roles seriously and perform their duties with thoughtfulness and caring. Others reject their

positions, as in Meredith's case, or are not a good "fit" for their apprentice, as in Ian's case.

The Impact of Colleagues

> ...The novice teacher's work life is centered not in the central office but in her school, with fellow teachers. It is to them that she looks for advice about how to teach well and for support in how to become a full-fledged member of the teaching staff. Whether the novice can count on those colleagues will depend largely on the prevailing norms and patterns of interaction that exist within the school. (Kardos et al., 2001, p. 251)

No matter what type of relationship these ten first-year teachers developed with their principals, department chairs, and mentor teachers, each of the teachers entered their first year of teaching with an expectation to connect with colleagues. As relative "equals" in the hierarchy of schools, new teachers look to their colleagues for support, guidance, and friendship. Though they usually enter schools with little knowledge of the type of faculty they are joining, new teachers want to reach out to their colleagues, and the importance of collegiality to new teachers' experiences in schools cannot be underestimated.

Johnson (2004) maintains that the new generation of teachers, those hired after 2000, come to teaching or will come to teaching with an entirely new set of attitudes and expectations for teaching than their veteran counterparts. One of the major differences Johnson (2004) cites is new teachers' expectations and preparation for working with colleagues and working in professional teams. Part of this "new attitude" toward collegiality is due in large part to the fact that many beginning teachers are entering teaching from other fields and have had experiences in other workplace settings, workplaces that facilitated teamwork and cooperation. Of my ten participants,

six had experiences in other workplaces, work environments ranging from a children's hospital to a glassblowing studio to a corporate human resource department. This wide array of work experiences gave over half of my participants a taste of other workplace realities, which, in turn, affected how they came to see their schools as workplaces.

Whereas the retiring generation of teachers most likely entered teaching with an expectation of autonomy and privacy, new teachers enter schools with expectations of observations, feedback, and collaboration (Johnson, 2004). When new teachers' expectations for professional exchange collide with veteran teachers' expectations for autonomy, what often results is a "balkanized" faculty (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991) "made up of separate and sometimes competing groups, jockeying for position and supremacy like loosely connected independent city states" (p. 52).

Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) recognize the fact that there can be competition and power struggle amongst faculty in a school. Just as there is a hierarchy to the structure of schools, so is there a hierarchy to the structure of teaching. One of the only ways one can gain power and status as a teacher is through years of experience, and so veteran teachers, those who have "put in the time," are often at odds with the more novice teachers in a school. This power struggle within the ranks of teachers can play out in different ways. Sometimes, it pits the idealistic against the cynical, the hopeful versus the skeptics. Other times, it pits the "principal's pets" against those who complain about the administration. And still other times, this conflict can play out by pitting the over-achieving teachers with the under-achieving teachers, a conflict symptomatic of envy and competitiveness.

Many of my teacher participants described ways in which their colleagues, veteran and novice alike, were supportive and friendly during their first year of teaching. Cathy describes her colleagues below:

> …So, the thing that really made a difference in my first year of teaching was undoubtedly the people I worked with. Undoubtedly. I don't know how I would have made it through the year without my mentor teacher, and this other English teacher, and the first year teacher down the hall who's going through the same things as me, and the second year teacher who said, "Don't worry, this is what I did the first year, and it will get better." Normally, I'm someone who likes to work more independently on things, but I really changed my entire philosophy and really worked together with people as much as possible this year because I needed them. I really did. And, I learned I could gain so much from that. (Cathy)

It is clear from Cathy's excerpt that the collegiality she experienced in her first-year of teaching forced her to come out of her shell and to learn to work collaboratively, a hopeful byproduct of her colleagues' supportive stance. And, from what she describes below, it is clear that each supportive colleague played a different role for Cathy, from her mentor to the only other first-year teacher in the school to her neighbors down the hall. What stands out for me in Cathy's story is the support she felt in being accepted into the community of teaching at her school. Her statement also reinforces how powerful even a simple "Hello" or "Good morning" can mean to a beginning teacher.

> …Everyone served a different role…The only other first-year teacher in the building with me was the social studies, seventh grade teacher, and we would just plain talk about the whole experience of being a first-year teacher, and it was just reassuring to know that she was going through similar experiences. It was very important. And we really shared a lot of ideas and a lot of feelings that we were having. So, if I were feeling like giving up, and she was having the same [feeling] two days before that, it was good to share and talk about how we were replenishing and rejuvenating and how we were getting through those hard times. So, the other eighth grade English teacher, she was there really to do just planning…We would share ideas more on planning. And then there are

> people across the hall, my neighbor. It was just nice to say, "Good morning" and to be able to just share little stuff with. So, everyone played such an important role in different ways. (Cathy)

For Valerie, Maria and Meredith, who are 23, 23 and 28 years old respectively, the collegiality they encountered in their schools tended to be more personal and age-related. In Valerie and Maria's cases, they quickly bonded with the other humanities teachers in their school, English and social studies teachers who tended to be young and relatively inexperienced. As humanities teachers, Valerie and Maria taught ninth grade cohorts and were paired with male, interdisciplinary teaching partners. This age and experience-related grouping of humanities teachers at South Shore High School created an almost automatic cohort of young, idealistic teachers, most of whom did not have families or partners at home.

> …In humanities there's like this kind of family atmosphere, people take care of each other…we hang out, we play Whiffle ball together and go to the bar and have drinks after big work events…it's camaraderie. (Valerie)

Maria explains further:

> …The humanities teachers got together over the summer…basically for [them to say to] me and Valerie, "This is what we do, these are some suggestions for you, here's some ways to do this and this and this" and that was really helpful…[So,] there's all these people there that I've known since the beginning of the year… and their classrooms are right nearby…Everybody [on humanities teams] basically said, "If you have any questions, just come and ask, it doesn't matter." And, that was really helpful in that way that all of sudden there were all these resources…all these people all of a sudden offered themselves…(Maria)

Meredith also found a supportive cohort among the other young teachers in her school, most of whom were history teachers. This type of collegial support, though, is often ignored because it does not operate in an official capacity. Meredith talks about informal new teacher meetings with the history department and going out for margaritas

on Fridays in the same way that Valerie talks about hanging out and playing Whiffle ball. Because the school does not officially sanction these sorts of collegial interactions, and because they involve get-togethers outside of school, they are too often overlooked, I think, as opportunities for collegial support. But, if we are to value new teachers' entrances into schools as components of their development, then these events and bonds seem as justified and important as those formal bonds that are restricted to inside the school walls.

> …I ended up going to the history department because the history department…kind of ran meetings for new teachers, where we could vent and be truly expressive…Those meetings were the most valuable because we could talk in a very casual, very emotional way… I would not have survived without [my peer support group]. I would have been so unhappy. At the beginning of the school year, there were many opportunities to be social. And when teachers get together…we talk about work, and we talk about kids, and we talk about parents…I can think of two barbecues at people's houses or gatherings at people's houses and then Friday afternoon margaritas. That was great. That was really where I would bond and get to talk about school but also learn about the kids. (Meredith)

For Andrew, whose English department was comprised of experienced, female teachers, he was the lone, inexperienced teacher in the bunch. This afforded him a sort of status within the department.

> …I'm the youngest person in my department by at least five or six years. And, after that there's a big jump to probably 15 years. The average age in the department has got to be mid-40s, so I'm definitely the baby. And, there's only one other male English teacher, so in that sense, it's all very female dominated, I guess. But it really hasn't been any kind of dominion. The women have really been great to me, really supportive, really nice, really friendly, really funny. I couldn't ask for a better group of coworkers. (Andrew)

Tori looked to another first-year teacher in her school, someone with whom she had also completed her teacher education program, for her main source of support outside of her mentor teacher. In addition, she would look to other teachers on her

"family," units that operated like middle school teams, to consult about students and behavior issues.

> … [Another first-year teacher in my school] was definitely my closest friend and colleague who I consulted with about what was going on in the school and our teaching practice. And, she's the only person I would tell everything to…But then the other people [I talked with] were teachers who worked with my students. Since we worked in families, the science teacher, the math teacher, and the history teacher, those were the people that I would go to to speak about students, to see how they're handling the situation. (Tori)

For Barbara, like Andrew, it was her English department colleagues to whom she turned for support and for curricular guidance, as well as for companionship at lunch.

> … [The other English teachers and I] had a lot of interaction and at lunch we tended to sit together…It's really a good group of people. It's a good blend of people. We have some very generous people and then we have some people who are just like, "Oh yea, I did that. I didn't like it." But we share. Even as a first year teacher, the things that worked well for me I'd share with other people…So that was the nice thing, sharing…it's a nice way to keep learning because if you get stuck in your own little world, you're stale. (Barbara)

The stories of collegiality above are presentations of what is possible when teachers work together as teams, as true colleagues, and as supports for their newest faculty members. It is clear that the veteran teachers and colleagues described above did not position themselves as superior to the first-year teachers. There seem to be no hierarchical privileges or power plays at work in these stories.

As Johnson (2004) cites in her assessment of the "next generation of teachers," second-career and job-savvy teachers will be filling positions in schools as a wave of baby boom teachers retire. These new teachers, who are well-versed in collaborative work environments and team approaches to problems, will no doubt be looking for

teaching positions in schools that are able to offer them the collegiality they seek. This will be a challenge for schools in the years to come: to promote and, somehow, help to create collegial working relationships among faculty, both veteran and novice alike.

But, over the years, teaching has been slow to transform from individualistic to collaborative, and many new teachers become disillusioned when they discover the loneliness of the classroom teacher. The isolation of teachers is well documented, especially at the high school level where schools were historically designed in an egg-crate fashion. As Lortie (1975) explains,

> the entry to [teaching] is person to person, each working largely in isolation from others. Whatever the effects of the private ordeal may be, it is not likely that they build the common bonds which help construct a common occupational subculture. (p. 74)

The challenge for schools remains, as it has for many years, to chip away at the embedded culture of teacher isolation in schools.

Four of the ten teachers interviewed spoke to me about the lack of collegiality at their schools. Three of them taught at the high school level and one in a middle school. Ian, Valerie, Sarah, and Meredith each describe feelings of disconnect and separateness from their colleagues at school. Ian, a temporary substitute teacher during his first year of teaching, was discouraged in his attempts to observe a colleague.

> ...I kept trying to see this one English teacher who everyone thought was the paragon of English teaching. I asked four or five times, "Can I sit in on one of your classes and see how you do it?" and he said, "Oh sure, let me get back to you" and then he'd never get back to me...He was having his own thing going on with students. I got that sense after a while... I really had a hard time getting together with other teachers, just finding the time to do it...I'm pretty sure this is a common complaint among teachers in general. They just don't have the time. It's sad because you really need to talk with other people and figure out what they're doing and...it's difficult without that kind of conversation going on. (Ian)

The tyranny of time is rampant in teaching. Teachers at all levels often cite the lack of time to meet with colleagues, to study their teaching, and continue to learn in collaborative settings. While Ian describes a lack of time in his day, Valerie tells a story of how her lack of experience in teaching affected her status in her school. Valerie, a teacher at South Shore High, an urban school, describes a cultural rift between herself and a veteran teacher.

> ...My department is very interesting. There are some older teachers who've been there forever...they've got their stuff together. They know what they're talking about... they've taught for 30 years, and I do not take away from that. But they do not know who I am. They're very much into the philosophy of, "Why should I even bother knowing you?" because the turnover rate at South Shore High is huge. Teachers just come and then they go, and the older teachers have seen it for so long...I know that half of my department has no idea who I am. Recognizing this fact, I know what my place is in department meetings. I will chirp in when asked, but for the most part, I keep nice and silent... I know that I have to earn my position, and as much as that's a weird feeling, I understand it...One of my colleagues...she was telling me, "It comes to the point where I've seen so many young teachers come in, and I've given them advice, and I've invested my time and my knowledge in them, and then they just kind of left." She's like, "Right now, if you haven't been here for three years or more, I don't know who you are, and I don't want to know who you are. You need to earn my respect and my attention." (Valerie)

Although Valerie was supported in her teaching by her younger, more inexperienced colleagues on the humanities team, she did not experience a high level of engagement or support from the veteran teachers in her department. The high teacher attrition rate at South Shore High accounts for this experienced teacher's behavior, to a degree. But, this scenario is such a complex one. Clearly, the experienced teacher described above has been burned by beginning teacher attrition at the school; beginning teachers in whom she invested her time eventually left. Many would argue that beginning teachers have a better chance of staying if they experience a collegial culture

in their schools. And yet, this experienced teacher was denying Valerie her time and effort, almost as a punishment for those who had left.

As we seek to slowly but surely change the culture of schools, I believe that the tradition of "balkanized" and competitive faculties within school, especially in high school, needs to be reconfigured. As we can see from Valerie's case, although she received support from her peers, she could not benefit from the craft knowledge and collective wisdom of the experienced faculty in her school. The status quo of teachers working in isolation, or in relative segregation from their colleagues, needs to shift. As Nieto (2003), along with others, asserts, "My work with teachers over many years has convinced me that it is time to challenge the perception of teaching as a private effort" (p. 78).

At the time of this interview, Valerie made it clear that she had a commitment to stay at South Shore High School. Because she was invested in the school and in her future at this school, Valerie was able to put herself in her colleagues' shoes. She understood why her colleague would think this way, why her colleague would act so guarded and hesitant toward new teachers. Valerie uses her capability for empathy here to understand and, to some extent, accept this aspect of the teacher culture in her school.

Like Valerie, Sarah felt like an "outsider" among her colleagues. In Sarah's case, her school's culture was predominantly local; that is, the majority of teachers at the Parker School were natives to the school's close-knit urban neighborhood. Since Sarah and a couple of her colleagues had come to Parker from out of town or out of state, they felt excluded from the dominant culture of the school.

> …I didn't feel part of a community. I wasn't welcomed or embraced…I'm going to compare this to Ashton [Middle School] again

> because it's my only other teaching experience. At Ashton I was a student teacher, and I felt a part of the community and they made me feel that way. The teachers on my team were so welcoming and so hopeful and so warm. They all wrote me letters of recommendation at the end of the year, and I worked as a part of the team. I wasn't this kind of outsider. Even on the team, I was working hand in hand. They always asked me my opinion, they asked me for input…Here at Parker, I don't feel like [I'm] a part of something…We're not expected to act as a community. We're treated more like a business, not a community. And so because of that it results in us being very formal [to one another]. (Sarah)

Sarah's lament that she doesn't feel "a part of something" is heightened by the collegiality she experienced in her student teaching placement. Sarah's expectations of how it should feel to be a teacher are not being met in her first-year due in large part to the fact that she felt "part of the community" during her student teaching experience. Armed with the knowledge of what is possible in schools, Sarah's expectations were dashed by the lack of collegiality at the Parker School. Similarly, Meredith describes her disappointment in the lack of collaboration and sharing among her English department colleagues.

> …The English Department, because of our department head, it's just "Whatever you want. Teach that book. Go right ahead." For example, I'm teaching poetry right now and when I was working on this unit, I sent an email to the department and I said, "Just wondering, what do you teach for poetry? What poems do you use?" I heard back from two teachers. One teacher sent me a link to poetry.com, the other teacher, the new teacher with me, said, "I'm doing it too." So she and I did something collaborative, but everybody else has taught it for so long…And on one hand it's nice because there's freedom, and I appreciate that as a new teacher. I can explore. But at the same time there's no wheel. I need to reinvent the wheel. (Meredith)

Like Sarah, Meredith seems to have mixed feelings about the state of the faculty at her school. On the one hand, she has curricular freedom and can teach in her classroom with few strings attached. On the other hand, this hands off approach by senior faculty members, including her department chair, leaves her feeling isolated and

cut off from her colleagues. This tension involved in teaching in secondary schools—the tension between autonomy and isolation— is another well-documented problem; we have studied it, named it, and studied it some more. And yet, Willard Waller's (1939) image of teacher as "rugged individualist" endures because, as McLaughlin and Talbert (2001) maintain, in order for full-scale change to occur, the entire culture of teaching needs to change--a tall order.

> Building learning community into the work lives of American high school teaching is fundamentally a problem of reculturing the profession—changing the ethos of teaching from individualism to collaboration, from conservatism to innovation. (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001, p. 125)

In 1975, Lortie hypothesized that the significance of teachers' relationships with colleagues were "secondary and derivative in nature," giving way to teachers' more important relationships inside the classroom with students (p. 187). However, my research indicates that teachers' relationships with colleagues are just as important, and just as primary, to their successful entrance into their school. As we saw in the cases of Cathy, Valerie, Andrew, Tori, Meredith and Barbara, collegiality goes a long way in providing first-year teachers with much-needed intrinsic psychic rewards: goodwill, collaboration, friendliness, and teamwork. And, conversely, beginning teachers who lack collegiality or, at the very least, a sense of belonging or community in their first year of teaching are more likely to leave their school or leave teaching altogether.

As we have seen throughout this chapter, a first-year teacher's entrance into a school is often complicated by the hierarchical structures of schools. As we work down the hierarchy, from principal to department chair to mentor teacher and veteran teachers and, finally, to novice teachers, we can see how the professionals in each of these positions make conscious choices to either wield their power against beginning teachers

or to use their positions of power to support and nurture new teachers in their first year at a school.

CHAPTER 7

WHAT DOES TEACHING MEAN TO FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS?

In my third interview with each of my ten participants, I asked them to describe to me the meaning they had made of their first year of teaching. What follows in this chapter are the two prevalent themes that emerged from those interviews: the rewards of their service to others and their "long haul" attitudes toward teaching.

The ten teachers I interviewed represent, for the most part, positive forces in the world of teaching. I was inspired by their energy and enthusiasm, as well as by their reflexivity. So much of the literature on beginning teachers is tainted with a deficit view of newness: lost at sea, sink or swim, trial by fire. Many of my participants were motivated in their teaching not only by their students, but also by a sense of service—"a calling"—and a commitment to contribute positively to society and to their communities.

The idealism and hope represented by these teachers is in large part a byproduct of their youth, vitality and energy. But their idealism is also linked to their feelings that teaching is a "good fit" for them, their notion that being in schools with kids is where they belong. I am reminded of a quote in Robert Coles' A Call to Service, spoken by his mentor and professor, Perry Miller:

> There's a moral asymmetry that takes hold of us teachers rather too commonly—we think of ourselves as offering service to others, giving them our best, and forget what's in it for ourselves, the service that we're receiving from our students. (p. 177)

Given the time to reflect and to talk about their students, these first year teachers discussed the symmetry they felt in their relationships with students, a reciprocity, a

two-way street of respect and trust. All in all, they really seem to have a sense of doing good in the world and, at the same time, are in positions that make them happy—Lortie's (1975) notion of intrinsic psychic rewards.

The Rewards of Service

According to Lortie (1975), the culture and structure of teaching favors psychic rewards, that is, rewards that are more subjective and intrinsic than, say, salary, prestige, or fringe benefits of the job. The significance of psychic rewards in teaching stems from the historical relationship between teaching and service; if teachers cannot expect to make a high salary or to earn a position of prestige in society, they need to look inward to the intrinsic rewards that keep them going. Lortie (1975) claims that teachers experience intrinsic psychic rewards in direct proportion to their sense of achievement in the classroom.

Based upon Lortie's (1975) claim, many of my first-year teachers felt "the glow of high achievement" (p. 121) in their classrooms with their students, as many of them spoke at length about the positive relationships they had with their students, about the satisfaction they felt as teachers, and about the satisfaction they received from their contribution (or service) to society. In the following excerpt, Cathy expresses not only why she has become a teacher but also her role as an agent of change. As a middle school teacher in an urban setting, Cathy understands the vital role she plays in the social fabric.

> …I see myself as being an agent of change because I want my students to go on and have the power to change their lives, change the lives of others, and to ultimately change some of the things that are going on in our society… To me education is so important…It's really my passion. It's a

> way that I can contribute to society...It really upsets me that there aren't more places in our society where people have the opportunity to change themselves...Poverty tends to be inherited, and wealth is inherited, and racism and everything is just passed on down. Where is the only place that changes can really happen? I really believe that it's education. And, so that's why I see myself as someone who's going to help kids create a space where they will come and...be able to see their lives in a different way, be able to see the world in a different way and go back out there and try to work and change things. (Cathy)

It is interesting to examine Cathy's background a bit to understand why education has been and continues to be so important in her life. Neither of Cathy's parents attended college, and both are working-class people. Cathy was picked on throughout her school career and often feared going to school. As a result, she never really connected with her own education until she attended community college. It was there that she met a professor who changed her life. He realized her potential as a writer, spent extra time coaching her on her writing, and treated her like a scholar and a peer. At community college, Cathy finally connected with her formal education; she began to realize her own potential and eventually enrolled in a four-year college and then a graduate program in teacher education. In reflecting on her own experience as a student, it is understandable why Cathy views herself, in her role as a teacher, as an agent of change. She is a changed person due to the intervention of one teacher in her own life.

Andrew shares a similar background. Neither of his parents attended college and both are working-class people as well. Though he was a talented student in school, he hid his talents for fear of being labeled a nerd. During his high school career, Andrew fell in with the "slacker" crowd and exhibited his defiance of school authorities by printing an underground newspaper that bordered on libelous. Expelled from school in

his senior year, he didn't consider going to college, as that was "for suckers, for losers." Trying his hand at other jobs, namely working in a tire shop and enlisting in the Army National Guard, Andrew's decision to become a teacher was grounded in his comic book mantra: to use his powers "for good and not evil."

> …I started to feel like maybe I had a responsibility to the world to do something positive with my life. And that's how I ended up even considering being a teacher. I didn't really make that decision until I was a junior in college…I'd already been through the Army training at that point, and I realized all the different paths that my life could take, and I thought about the one that would really do the most good in the world. I briefly considered law school and politics, and I really felt I couldn't stomach the compromises that are necessarily involved in a political life. I'm not a very compromising person when it comes down to what I believe in. And I believe very strongly in the value of education. That's what it comes down to. It sounds corny, but I really feel it. I feel like, to paraphrase Stan Lee, that's using my powers for good and not evil… that's sort of your basic responsibility in life… Compared to changing tires or working on tanks or digging ditches for a living, I've got it easy…I can do those other things, but teaching is more and more becoming the thing that I am really skilled at…[And] I have that sense of responsibility. I don't think you can be a teacher without it. If you don't have some kind of an overall philosophy of "Everyday, I'm doing good in the world," I really think you start to lose your motivation. (Andrew)

Another teacher, Valerie, shares a similar background and view of her work as a high school English teacher. Like Andrew and Cathy, neither of Valerie's parents attended college and both are working-class. And like them, Valerie attributes her love of learning and discovery and her reverence for education to several memorable teachers who influenced her early on. Valerie's reflections on her first year of teaching demonstrate a similar service-minded motivation to teach: she believes she's able to positively affect the lives of her students and to affect them with the excitement for learning and discovery that was so valuable to her as a high school student.

> …Everything that I've done…has all led up to this point of me completing my first year of teaching. I'm doing what I want to do, and I think it's the

> natural progression of things… I was meant to be a teacher…and I continue to like it…It's all kind of lead up to now being able to put that in practice and being able to affect the lives of other people… to affect them with this kind of enthusiasm for discovery and learning…This is what I've lived my life to get to…I'm happy with that, and I'm satisfied with the choices that I've made…I'm lucky. (Valerie)

Meredith shares this same ideal of contributing to the common good. Like the others, Meredith believes in the power of education to transform, to inspire, to "set a spark off" in students. Neither of Meredith's parents attended college. Her mother is a hairdresser and her father was an electrician. Her own school experience was negative, as she claims that she, like Cathy, rarely connected with teachers or curricula and was on the margins of social life in school. When she got to college and began paying for her own education, however, Meredith realized the importance of advocating for herself and making the most of her courses. Late in her college career, she began to see the connection between education and envisioning a professional life. Now, as a high school English teacher in a suburban school, she is motivated by the possibility of inspiring her students to learn and discover on their own. Again, the sense I get from Meredith is that teaching for her is a way to be connected and a way that she can have an effect on the world.

> …I think of it as the best way to be involved in the community possible…I want to think of myself, and perhaps this is idealistic, but I want to think of myself as leaving my kids with at least one original idea…Something that they either didn't know they could do, are proud of themselves for, or want to learn more about…I want to set a spark off in each of my kids…I want to awaken my kids on some level. (Meredith)

Sarah, too, shared her thoughts about teaching and its rewards. Like many of the other first-year teachers in this study, she sees her work as a teacher as contributing to the common good. As someone who abandoned another career path to enter teaching,

Sarah has the privilege of having tried another job that was not fulfilling. This stance is a privilege in that it gives Sarah something to which she can compare the stressors and rewards of teaching. In her previous job in human resources, she felt unchallenged and disconnected from children. Her lifelong involvement with children through a Jewish youth organization influenced her early on and cemented her connection with youth. She went into teaching largely in part because she missed working with kids and wanted to steer her life in a direction where she could work with kids for a living.

Unlike most of the other teachers, however, Sarah's parents disapproved of her new career choice. College educated and white-collar professionals in a large metropolitan area, her parents had higher hopes for their daughter, and her mother remarked that, as a teacher, Sarah would be just "an everyday person." Despite the complexities of the first year and the disapproval of her parents, Sarah maintained in our interviews that she made the right choice and that, through service to children, she was "adding something to the world."

> ...My worse day of teaching is better than my best day in the office...After everything that's happened this year, I never once said, "I don't want to teach anymore" because I love teaching. I have frustrations with it, but I love teaching...I feel very rewarded on a day-to-day basis, whether I feel that the day was a good one or not...And, I see myself through the next thirty years as a teacher, and that makes me happy. It's what I want to do. It's where I want to be...I'm adding something to the world. Whether it's 30 kids, 150 kids, 1 kid, I'm adding something to their world...I'm a part of each of these child's lives...I love interacting with the kids everyday, and so that kind of keeps me going. (Sarah)

Like Sarah's parents, Tori's parents disapproved of her decision to go into teaching. Tori's parents are both Chinese; her father is a medical doctor in the small, Texas town where she grew up, and her mother works at home. As immigrant parents who want to see their youngest child succeed, Tori's parents stressed the opportunities

that medical school and law school could offer her. And, while Tori's sister did become a lawyer, Tori describes below what it was like to tell her parents she wanted to become a teacher.

> [My senior year in college], that's when I was like, "I'm telling my parents [I want to be teacher]." And telling my parents was like telling them that I was gay. My parents were like, "What do we do? How did you become this way? Is it the friends you're hanging out with at school? I don't understand. Don't you know the life you're going to lead?" And, I was upset. I think that's the only time my mother's ever hung up the phone with me. I was crying and I was so upset. So, that was bad. My dad was like, "Well, maybe you can go and get your Ph.D. and then you can teach." (Tori)

After Tori graduated with her B.A. in English from an elite university in Texas, she made the decision to apply to graduate schools for teacher education, partly because she felt that she was too immature at that point to go directly into teaching. She applied to several elite colleges and was admitted to all of them. And still, her parents were hoping that she would change her mind.

> I was so amazed that I got into Ivy College, and after that, my parents felt like, "Okay, this teacher thing, maybe that's okay. And maybe she'll change her mind when she's in grad school and will want to get her Ph.D. At least we can tell people that she got into Ivy College." (Tori)

Finally, upon completing her first year as an English teacher in an urban high school, Tori and her parents seem to have gained some perspective on her career decision. As we can see from Tori's narrative, one's entrance into teaching can also be fraught with an enormous amount of cultural and familial struggle, in addition to the many professional struggles that have been discussed in the previous chapters.

> ...My job is a huge part of my identity. And, in relation to my family...I think that my parents have changed. My parents see that I'm very passionate about [teaching], and so I think that's enough for them...[They're] pretty typical immigrant parents...They want happiness, and for them, money is happiness in a new country. So, I think they pass

> that on to their kids. But, [now] they realize that that's not necessarily my first priority…that maybe they were a little shortsighted about what makes me happy…And because I'm doing okay, and I'm pretty successful for a first year teacher, they're proud of me in that way. But, when the layoffs were coming out [at the end of the year] and I thought I was going to get one, my dad took that opportunity to suggest that maybe I can go to law school. (Tori)

Rebecca has a somewhat divergent perspective about her work as a teacher. Though she also sees teaching as a service, separate from jobs that are focused on production and distribution, she does not consider teaching to be a profession, but a job. This is an interesting perspective for Rebecca, as her mother is a retired high school teacher and her father is a community college professor. As a self-proclaimed Marxist and as a sociologist, Rebecca views teaching as the best possible way for her to secure a job doing something she enjoys.

> …When I think of people saying [teaching] is a calling…I think they thought that it was sort of a prescribed role for them. That somehow it was this role that they were meant to take on…Sometimes I've heard it described like an innate drive to be a teacher, to share knowledge or to improve the world through teaching…I think for me what's different is that is not the number one reason for me to go into teaching. It's a lovely idea. I do feel some of those things. I feel as though I can make a difference in the lives of the students that I work with…But it's also a job that pays the bills and is something I enjoy and something that I feel like I'm good at…One thing I really like about teaching is…it's a service job, so you're actually providing services. It's not a job that is actually market based. Removing myself from the market system, the free market system… is very soothing to me. As somebody who was working for an artist for years and felt kind of disillusioned when it was exposed to me that art is really just another marketing system with a factory and exploitation of unskilled labor, this is really nice to me. So I feel like I get to remove myself from some of that without having the guilt of being the capitalist…(Rebecca)

For Barbara, who teaches English in a suburban school, teaching is a natural progression in the scope of her life and careers. Barbara's mother was a stay-at-home mom, and her father worked his way up in a sporting goods company, eventually

reaching the position of vice president before his retirement. She moved around a lot as a child, due to her father's job, and she grew used to the adventure of attending new schools and making new friends wherever she lived. A first-year teacher at 43, Barbara has been a nurse and a mother of four children. Having worked for years as a nurse and patient liaison at a children's hospital, and having raised four children with her husband and, after he died, as a single mother, Barbara sees her work with children of all ages as central to her identity and to her happiness. Barbara's journey from mother to nurse to teacher seems to honor her love of service to others, as she explains below.

> ...Teaching is definitely a profession but you are doing a service because you're helping to raise the next generation. You have them more during the school day than their parents have them. We've got them six hours a day. And as a parent, I always had this great feeling of honor when a teacher would say, "Your child's doing well"...I always liked to have connection with [my kids'] teachers because they are a huge part of my children's lives. And [now] I feel like I'm a huge part of other people's children's lives. So it's a service. (Barbara)

Barbara finds satisfaction and happiness in service to others, and she clearly has fun as a teacher. Perhaps because of her maturity and her experience with teenagers, Barbara is able to have fun despite sometimes sweating the small stuff. After searching for her life's work, so to speak, she feels she has finally found it with teaching high school English.

> ...This is what I've been waiting for. When I grew up, what was I going to be? It took me into my 40's to figure out what it was. The last day of finals [this year] when I knew I wouldn't see my students again, I felt sad. I felt "Wow, what am I going to do when I'm not teaching?" [Teaching] works [for me] because it's almost like I've always had something to do with it. I've always been a teacher in one way or another. Whether it's been through Sunday school or when I was nursing, when I was teaching the patients about what would be coming up with their surgeries and what to expect, or with my own children. I've always been a teacher...This is the fun time in my life. I really have fun teaching. (Barbara)

The "Long Haul" Attitude

"I can see myself in it for the long haul" (Valerie).

In addition to their hopefulness toward their students, their students' abilities, and the power of education, the first-year teachers I interviewed displayed a hope for themselves as teachers and learners. Having faced many obstacles and difficulties in the notoriously trying first year of teaching, many of these teachers described their willingness to pick themselves up, dust themselves off, and start all over again in their second year of teaching. For example, in the following excerpt, Ian, a 50 year-old first-year teacher with two small children, compares his learning curve as a beginning teacher to his daughter's perseverance in learning to walk. In this passage, it is clear that Ian, as with many first-year teachers, expected to encounter difficulty in his transition from student to teacher. What is also clear here is his understanding of and commitment to persistence and trial and error.

> …Our second child is just learning how to walk. It's amazing…She would take these steps. She would fall down. She'd pick herself back up and walk another six steps…She did this countless times. She'd just get back up again as soon as she fell down…It takes a long time to learn to be a good teacher, unless you were born with a gift…It will be five years before I'm anywhere near where I want to be as a teacher…But this idea of persistence, I mean, I fall down a lot in the classroom, metaphorically…That's pretty much how I feel. [My daughter is] so excited to be able to stand on her feet and walk. I get excited when I actually think I'm communicating to some of my students, so it's the same idea. One step at a time and bob along forward, muddle through. That's what I've been doing so far. I've been falling down and picking myself up…(Ian)

Though the idea of falling down in the classroom and muddling through may not seem palatable to the nervous beginning teacher, after experiencing it for six months in his position as a temporary substitute English teacher in a

suburban high school, Ian well understands that falling down and getting back up is the nature of learning to teach. He has come to expect it, and he has learned to weather it good naturedly and honestly. There is hope in his analogy and in it we can see his desire someday to be where he wants to be as a teacher. He will keep trying. He doesn't expect to give up. Considering that about one third of all new teachers leave teaching in the first three years (Darling-Hammond, 2000), the hopefulness that Ian portrays in the above passage is reassuring. Through his acceptance that learning to teach takes time, Ian demonstrates the kind of tenacity and persistence that we undoubtedly wish all of our beginning teachers would have, a patience and hopefulness for the learning process.

Similarly, Maria, who is 22 and has wanted to be a teacher all her life, acknowledges that she is indeed a student of teaching. Like Ian, she understands that her first year of teaching was "the first step" in getting to be the teacher she wants to be. And, she is able to see room for improvement and change in the future without diminishing the meaning or accomplishments of her first year.

> ...I think that this year is the first step in aspiring to what I want to be in five years, ten years, how good I want to be. I still feel like this is the year that either makes me or breaks me...And I want to come back next year, so that's a good thing...But I feel like it's the first step on the ladder. I have so much that I want to do and so much that I want to change... I can see what I need to do now to be there and so the first step is, "This is where I am, this is where I want to be and this is what I have to change along the way to get there." (Maria)

Likewise, Cathy compares her first year to a first draft of a piece of writing and to laying the foundation for a structure. And similar to Ian's analogy, in Cathy's

analogies I find hope, hope for improvement, hope for next year, and ultimately hope for the students she's committed to working with.

> …My first year of teaching is like writing a first draft. I really believe that because…I just want to get to the point where I have a base or something to work off of. Now I can start revising. And, I'm really excited about that with my teaching…I feel that I have so much more to learn. I think if anything that's what this year has really shown me, how much I do have to learn. But…I have laid the basework or the foundation for next year and the years after that. (Cathy)

Tori describes this push and pull between the ideal and the reality of schools. She also offers a vision of hope as a teacher in an urban school. Though she realizes that she cannot control the ills of urban society and the effects it has on her students' lives outside of school, she truly believes that she creates a space for possibility each and every school day:

> …I feel like I'm a realist…But, then there's still part of me that's still reaching, that has these goals, so I guess that is part of the idealistic me. But, you're never going to get there unless you have realistic goals… Ideally, a teacher can create enough energy that it will trickle out [from the classroom]. But, you can't control what's going on in [students'] lives. I think that you can put padding around them. In those two hours that I have them, that's the consistency that they have in their lives…I feel if you're going to be a teacher, you have to work under that [gambling] mentality. You have to have an obsessive, compulsive urge to keep putting money into something and maybe you're losing in the end, but you hit the jackpot a couple times so you keep playing. And I feel like I encountered many teachers who are like that. And, those are the ones that have the positive outlook. Like, "I can hit the jackpot again and again."(Tori)

The "gambling mentality" that Tori refers to is an analogy of the dichotomy between a teacher's ideals and what can be realistically accomplished in a classroom or school. As a teacher, you want to win big, you want to hit the jackpot every day with your students. That is your ideal. But, as reality would have it, the jackpot is not attainable every day. And, as much as you are attuned to reality, the faith and hope of a

teacher (or the "obsessive, compulsive urge" as Tori describes it) fuels the fire every day. You have to walk into school each day thinking you'll hit the jackpot, so to speak. This hope for the ideal amidst the muckiness of the reality of schools is fuel for the novice teacher.

Nieto (2003), in her work with a teacher study group examining the question "What keeps teachers going?" found that one of the dominant themes in the stories and words of her teacher participants was "teaching as hope and possibility" (p. 53). In the chapter in which she discusses hope as it is manifested in teachers' work, Nieto (2003) states,

> Hope is at the very essence of teaching. In all my years of working with teachers, I have found that hope is perhaps the one quality that all good teachers share…In spite of anger and impatience or the level of frustration and exhaustion that they experienced, most remained in teaching…because of hope. (p. 52)

The members of Nieto's study group were predominantly veteran teachers, teachers who had stayed in the classroom in spite of everything and who had remained vibrant and energized by the work of teaching and learning.

Just as it is inspiring and empowering to read about veteran teachers who maintain a sense of hope, it is equally as significant and inspiring for our newest teachers to demonstrate a similar sense of hope and possibility. So much of the literature on the beginning years of teaching is fraught with stories of disillusioned novices, unsupportive colleagues, and the symptoms of "failing" schools that the notion of hope in beginning teachers gets pushed aside. Too often, I think, we imagine hope as a potential fortunate byproduct of a good year of teaching. To the contrary, I understand

the first-year teachers in this study to be motivated by and filled with hope—hope for themselves, for their students, and for schools in these difficult times.

CHAPTER 8

DISCUSSION & REFLECTION

I entered this research process asking, "What is it like to be a first year English teacher?" Now, at the end of twelve months of interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, interpreting, and writing, I ask myself, "What have I learned?" The final chapter of this dissertation consists of my reflections on my research study and research process. In the previous chapters, I outlined a series of issues that my in-depth interviews raised. Here, I will review some of the issues discussed in this study and will take them a bit deeper, further examining their complexities. I will also reflect on my experience with the research process, from interviewing in the spring and summer of 2003 to making meaning of my interview data and my findings.

Embracing the Struggle: An Alternative View of Teacher Development

In Chapter 4, I examined first-year teachers' developing personas as teachers and introduced the concept of "productive disequilibrium" (Gallagher & Stahlnecker, 2002). Productive disequilibrium is a relatively new lens through which we can view teacher development, though it was introduced to the field of education as one of the tenets of Piaget's theory of cognitive development and as a major assumption of the theory of constructivism. In addition, the notion of disequilibrium has been used in the field of psychology, though it more often referred to as "cognitive dissonance" (Kegan, 1982). Across fields, though, the theory of disequilibrium or dissonance maintains significance as the dialectic force that pushes us to redevelop, reconfigure, and

reimagine our schema. As Kegan (1982) describes below, a state of disequilibrium often has profound affects on our identity and sense of self.

> ...[During] those times in our lives when the specter of loss of balance is looming over the system...These are the moments when I experience fleetingly or protractedly that disjunction between who I am and the self I have created; the moments when I face the possibility of losing my self; the moments that Erikson refers to hauntingly as 'ego chill.' The chill comes from the experience that I am not myself, or that I am beside myself, the experience of a distinction between who I am and the self I have created. (p. 169)

Kegan's (1982) description of disequilibrium highlights how this theory is relevant to novice teachers' developing identities. The interview excerpts that I have presented throughout this dissertation have illustrated just what Kegan (1982) references above, the "disjunction" between my teacher participants' lifelong sense of themselves and their evolving sense of themselves as teachers. As beginning teachers move from their preparation into practice, so much of what they believe about teaching and learning is called into question by the sometimes difficult and complex realities of schools. It is at this intersection of a new teacher's ideals and the realities of schools that the initial state of a teacher's disequilibrium occurs. Most teachers experience this type of disequilibrium, and it is whether or not it is productive or unproductive that makes the difference in their development as teachers.

Beginning teachers are often taken aback by the pace and pressures of day-to-day teaching. As the new teacher experiences this disequilibrium in her new workplace, she undoubtedly searches for answers and perhaps turns to colleagues or teacher guidebooks for quick solutions to her problems. Or, the new teacher may start to experiment with different methods and strategies in her classroom, an approach that can be helpful though it is precarious. For, experimenting with new methods or lessons in

isolation, without the support of a mentor, coach, or colleague, can lead to unreflective responses to these experiments, responses that do not necessarily push the teacher forward in her practice.

These "first response" answer-driven approaches and experiment-driven approaches to teacher development are characterized by Gallagher and Stahlnecker (2002) as "unproductive disequilibrium" as the teacher is searching for easy answers to her dilemmas and, if necessary, will fall back on her old approaches if the new methods fail. This, they argue appropriately, is antithetical to a teacher's development. It is not until a teacher is willing to embrace the potential of the unknown, to reimagine, reshape, and revise her pedagogy that she will reach a point of productive disequilibrium. At this point, she is able to turn her state of instability and imbalance into productive energy with which she can move forward and better her teaching.

I was first introduced to this concept at a session at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) in 2002. It intrigued me then, and it has stuck with me ever since as one of the only theories of teacher development which I find useful in light of my participants' experiences and my own experiences as a teacher. One of the reasons I am so taken with this theory is that it is not only applicable to teachers; it is applicable to so many other personal and professional transitions in our lives, times when we feel "off kilter" or out of balance. Additionally, this perspective of teacher development seems to fit my participants' experiences as first-year teachers, for it is not dependent on adult development theory or on linear or cyclical stage theories of teacher development. Instead, it is a more existential view of teacher development in that it recognizes the site of struggle, the self, as the center of the teacher's growth and

development. In this way, it gives the teacher agency in negotiating her development as a teacher; the external forces that affect a teacher's development are considered secondary to the internal forces at play.

My participants, who ranged in age from 23 to 50, all experienced disequilibrium in their development as teachers, negotiations that were directly affected by their age, life experience, biography, and confidence as an adult authority figure. Though they all shared the similar experience of negotiating their teacher identities, their experiences were necessarily different. For example, Tori continued to struggle, even at the end of her first year of teaching, with the notion of herself as an authority figure. Given her history of acting and thinking in decidedly anti-authoritarian ways, and given her Asian heritage, Tori's continuing negotiation with her teacher identity is summarized by these two statements: "There's a part of me that is still very anti-establishment and [anti-]authority, but then here I am trying to be an authority figure in front of these students" and, "I think being Asian is a very interesting factor in my relationship with [students] because they recognize that I represent the establishment in some ways, but they also recognize that I'm a person of color." Tori's ability to reflect on and continue to grapple with these seemingly competing parts of her identity--her anti-authoritarian stance, her role as an authority figure and as a representative of "the establishment", and her identity as a person of color—illustrate how a novice teacher can embrace her state of disequilibrium as a site of struggle, growth, and new understanding.

Tori's experience with disequilibrium is necessarily different from Ian's, a 50-year old entrant into teaching. For Ian, his recognition of the slow learning curve

involved in learning to teach worked to create his sense of imbalance, his unsteady sense of self. Ian illustrates this sense of imbalance in his development as a teacher in the following excerpt:

> ...Our second child is just learning how to walk. It's amazing...She would take these steps. She would fall down. She'd pick herself back up and walk another six steps...She did this countless times. She'd just get back up again as soon as she fell down...It takes a long time to learn to be a good teacher...It will be five years before I'm anywhere near where I want to be as a teacher...But this idea of persistence, I mean, I fall down a lot in the classroom, metaphorically...That's pretty much how I feel. [My daughter is] so excited to be able to stand on her feet and walk. I get excited when I actually think I'm communicating to some of my students, so it's the same idea. One step at a time and bob along forward, muddle through... That's what I've been doing so far. I've been falling down and picking myself up...(Ian)

In comparing these two participants' states of disequilibrium relative to their development as teachers, it is clear that each teacher's struggle is contingent upon his or her biography and life context, in addition to the school context. Although Tori and Ian felt strongly about their convictions to become teachers, each of them continued to grapple, throughout his or her first year in the classroom, with their public personas, teacher identities, and growth as teachers. And, it seems to me, that both Tori and Ian understood the necessity of grappling with these issues in order to reach a point where they can feel comfortable with their teaching selves.

Similarly, Cathy's experience with disequilibrium caused her to re-examine her teaching identity and her relationships and boundaries with her students. She explained her experience in Chapter 4, when she described the difference between being the "cool" student teacher last year and the lead teacher in her first year, "Here I am as the teacher, and I'm saying, 'We're going to keep this very professional.' And that was hard. That was probably one of the hardest things..."(Cathy). Although Cathy had been

close with her students during her student teaching semester, she found it necessary to adopt a more professional stance with her middle school students during her first year of teaching. In this way, Cathy was able to use her state of disequilibrium productively, but allowing her new, though somewhat uncomfortable circumstance, to lead her to change her existing schema of herself as a teacher. By accepting, not rejecting, the significant differences between the role of a student teacher and of a lead teacher, Cathy altered her expectations and her teacher identity in concordance with her new experiences in the classroom.

This is where I believe that the notion of productive disequilibrium, as a theory of teacher development, gets tricky. For, in order to subscribe to it, one must necessarily learn to embrace, not to fear, change and uncertainty in one's life. I believe that, for most people, this is difficult to do, for we tend to like our lives to be neat, predictable, and routinized. We tend to be creatures of habit. Additionally, it is often hard for most of us to appreciate the process of struggle while we are immersed in it. Based on my research and with my work with first-year teachers, I can confirm that, for most beginning teachers, it is very difficult to embrace a state of disequilibrium during their first year of teaching. My experience has taught me that many beginning teachers prefer the "answer-driven" approaches to their development rather than the struggles that are involved in questioning the self, questioning their ideas, and taking the time to reimagine and revise their pedagogy. And yet, experience has also taught me that one's professional competence as a teacher can be directly proportional to one's ability to deal with complexity, to tolerate ambiguity, to cope with disequilibrium and discontinuity, and to take risks in their teaching.

Because I firmly believe that a comfortableness with disequilibrium needs to be fostered and developed in teachers, I believe that in preservice programs, professional development programs, and, perhaps most importantly, induction programs, teachers need to be given permission to abandon the prevalent answer-driven approaches to teaching and learning. Answer-driven approaches to teaching, though they can promote discussion, do not usually inspire self-reflection or critical dialogue among teachers. Likewise, answer-driven approaches to teaching do not move the teacher forward; rather, they tend to be Band-Aids for larger dilemmas that the teacher is experiencing. As teacher educators, we need to model the idea that teachers do not have to have tidy resolutions in order to have success in the classroom. When our novice teachers, upon experiencing their first few weeks in the classroom, say, "All that I have done and thought about teaching is being called into question," we need to push them to examine their sense of uncertainty and instability. What is being called into question? Why do you think your notions of teaching are being challenged?

Although I have had this theory of productive disequilibrium in the back of my mind for nearly two years, it did not come to the fore until I had the privilege of interviewing the ten first-year teacher participants in this study. Given the time to reflect on their teaching at the end of their first year, my participants were able to not only reconstruct points throughout the year where they experienced various levels of imbalance and uncertainty, but they were also able to walk me through their approaches to their problems. And, as the reader saw throughout the four chapters of participants' interview excerpts, many of these novice teachers reflected on the ways they were able to put constant pressure on their own thinking in order to better their teaching practice.

Additionally, the research method itself was part of this reflection process for the ten teachers I interviewed. The opportunity to sit with me for four and a half hours at the end of their first year of teaching afforded all of my participants the time to reflect on and make meaning of their struggles and their growth and development as teachers. In essence, these ten novice teachers inspired me to think through this new theory, for through their example, I was able to see the potential for a new theory of teacher development, one which privileges struggling, questioning, and revising as the path to transformation.

Beginning Teacher Support

Another theme from the previous chapters that I would like to discuss in more detail is the implementation of new teacher support efforts, such as collaborative groups, peer support groups (like Meredith discussed and valued so much), or critical friends groups (like Tori and her colleague's experience with their mentor, the school's literacy coach). Aside from Meredith and Tori's informal experiences in these types of collaborative and supportive settings, only four of my participants discussed formal efforts by their schools to provide beginning teacher support outside of mandated mentoring. Barbara attended three professional development days in her district for beginning teachers; Cathy attended seminars on the first year of teaching, which were led by an outside consultant hired by her district; Meredith was required to attend district wide new teacher meetings, which were facilitated by her principal, and which she characterized as more of a burden than they were worth; And, Andrew attended an orientation which he characterized as "useless."

These formal efforts by schools, some of which were helpful, some of which were not, are characteristic of the "one shot deal" and "hit or miss" approach so common to most beginning teacher support programs or efforts. These efforts were undoubtedly grounded in good intentions, but because they were not sustained or were not free from the political and hierarchical strings attached to schools, very few of my participants cited these "induction" experiences as being particularly helpful to them. Only one teacher, Barbara, discussed the effectiveness of her school's new teacher professional development program.

I believe that effective new teacher support structures could exist inside of schools, were we to erase the power and status dynamics that often make teacher-to-teacher support and collaboration so difficult. But, the difficulty of school-based new teacher support programs is that, even with the best intentioned facilitator or program coordinator, any program inside of a school, on some level, works to reinforce the attitudes and norms of teachers in the school, in other words, the status quo. This phenomenon was evident in several of my participants' experiences school-based support programs. For example, Meredith explained during our interviews that she was involved in a school-wide new teacher induction program. This program was facilitated by Meredith's principal, whom she described in Chapter Six as the type of person who wants to only hear "Yes" from his faculty: "That's all he wants to hear. Don't argue with him. Do not second guess him." Because her principal was facilitating this induction program, this supposed support program for new teachers, it is understandable why Meredith described it as a stressful environment, an evaluative atmosphere more than a supportive one.

Time after time, in my dissertation research and in my work facilitating out-of-school support groups for first-year teachers, I have spoken to beginning teachers about their inability to open up to their principals or to colleagues in their schools. Beginning teachers' unwillingness to "vent," to ask questions, or to show gaps in their knowledge in administrator or faculty-led induction programs is due to these parties' evaluative stances or their investment in the competency of the beginning teacher. Because first-year teachers are hesitant, even guarded, about speaking up about problems or questions they are having, it seems unproductive to locate induction or support programs inside of existing schools and school culture.

As I stated earlier, beginning teacher support programs that are located within the school often help to maintain the status quo. Mentors, administrators, and veteran teachers often work, consciously or unconsciously, to help maintain the existing teacher culture. This is why I believe that these types of new teacher supports—such as collaborative groups, peer groups, inquiry groups—can and should exist outside of schools, free from the politics, power, and evaluative nature of so much of teachers' work in their school buildings, and free from the pressure of maintaining the status quo. As Goodson (1998) points out below, if we are looking to new teachers to be voices of change in schools, then we need to provide safe forums for them to imagine what is possible.

> It is essential, then, that we be clear about what we mean by 'great beginnings' for teachers…Many school districts, for example, have established buddy or mentoring systems. These seem very helpful in allowing novices to learn the ropes of a particular school system, but they do this by helping to quickly bond new teachers to existing the teacher culture. Rather than helping to reform schools, these programs help to resist reform…(p. 53)

Class Issues in the Entrance to Teaching

In Chapter 7, I presented my participants' descriptions of the meaning they made of their first-year of teaching. Embedded in those meanings, and included in my descriptions of the participants, were issues of their background and class. Six out of the ten participants in this study came from working-class backgrounds, and for them, and their parents, teaching seemed a noble profession to enter. Though they did not make this explicit, I believe that for many of them teaching was a path to upward mobility, a way to earn a living as a professional and to hold a revered, if not a prestigious, position in society. This theme strikes a chord with me, for, as a first-generation college student, like many of my participants, I too entered teaching as a pathway to upward mobility, as a way to secure my place in the social fabric.

Four of my participants entered teaching from middle class or white-collar backgrounds, though only two, Sarah and Tori, discuss in Chapter 7 the impact this had on their view of teaching. Rebecca and Ian, who like Tori and Sarah, came from professional families, entered teaching after trying their hands at other careers. They eventually landed in teaching as a sort of compromise between their true aspirations and a job they could get to pay the bills. Both Rebecca and Ian were under pressure to pay the mortgage and to support partners or families at home. Teaching was a job that valued their intellect and skills while at the same time provided a viable and steady income. Though Tori and Sarah's did not feel these same pressures, their experience entering teaching was complicated their parents' negative reactions. Neither Sarah nor Tori's parents initially approved of their daughters' pursuits of careers in secondary teaching.

In light of my participants' different class backgrounds and different experiences entering the field, I can understand how teaching is a career that is stuck between the middle class and the working class. In this way, teaching is a "step down" for some and a "step up" for others. In my own experience, entering the teaching field was a kind of "tweener" for me, a step up in terms of job stability, income, and professional status (I was a waitress and a lifeguard before I became a teacher) but a "step down" in the eyes of those who thought I could do more. In the words of Sarah's mother, by becoming a teacher, I would be an "everyday person."

The low positioning of teachers on the measuring stick of status and prestige in this country is not news. Teachers are not paid well, are up against incredible odds, and have to contend, on a daily basis, with so many of the ills of our society. In this sense, teaching is akin to social work or other human service jobs. And, by viewing teaching through this lens, one can understand why Tori's mother and father, Chinese immigrants, disapproved of her decision to enter teaching. They were pushing her to get her Ph.D. or to enter law school in order for her to find happiness, which, as Tori explained, they tend to equate with status and money. And yet, for Andrew, who was changing tires at a garage and fixing tanks in the Army before he became a teacher, teaching is a dream job. As he states in Chapter 7, "Compared to changing tires or working on tanks or digging ditches for a living, I've got it easy."

The precarious status of teaching somewhere between the working and middle class must have a direct relationship to who enters teaching and why they enter. We often hear about the recruitment problem in teaching, that is, the inability of the teaching profession to attract the "best and brightest" among recent college graduates.

This notion of "best and brightest" is so often a euphemism for the middle or upper middle class. Our best and brightest students, from Ivy League colleges and from the top tiers of graduating classes throughout the country, are bypassing careers in teaching for more lucrative jobs in business and industry.

So much energy and research has been devoted to studying this phenomenon and so many initiatives have been put in place to attract these "best and brightest" to the teaching ranks. Yet, so little has been done to attract teachers from the working and lower middle classes. Currently, there are efforts in community colleges in Massachusetts to attract paraprofessionals from the public schools to programs in teacher education. These efforts are being funded through the very controversial No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. As much as I believe that the NCLB has the potential to ultimately do more damage than good to the state of public schooling, I believe that these types of initiatives are hopeful signs that legislators are finally recognizing and addressing the "working class" roots of the teaching ranks.

But, as I stated before, there is a retention problem in teaching, not a recruitment problem (Moir, 2004), and so I also believe that we need to devote more energy to supporting and encouraging those who are entering teaching, not luring to teaching those who do not want to come. I have learned from my interviews that teachers from working-class backgrounds who attended community colleges (Cathy and Barbara) and state colleges (Andrew and Valerie) are indeed among our "best and brightest" teachers. These four teachers are thoughtful, reflective teachers with amazing potential. Perhaps our definition of "the best and brightest" needs to shift to those first or second-

generation college students from working-class backgrounds who are eager to enter teaching, as it is their "step up" on the ladder of social mobility.

Reflections on the Interview Process

My experience researching and writing this dissertation was my first, full-fledged experience with in-depth interviewing from a phenomenological perspective. The interviewing process, which I completed during April to August 2003, never once seemed tedious or wasteful to me, even though I logged over 4,000 miles on my road trips to and from my interviews with participants. I was able to come to know my ten participants through the four and a half hours of "official" interviewing time that I spent with each of them. In addition, after interviews were completed, I would inevitably continue talking casually with my participants. I was welcomed into their homes and, in effect, was generously invited into their lives. This generosity amazed me, for I was a relative stranger to most of my participants, and yet they shared their homes and the details of their lives with me.

During the interviewing process, I came to notice how some interviews seemed "stronger" than others. On any given day, with any given participant, I could experience a sort of "blah" interview, an interview that seemed static, uninspired, or disconnected. I'm sure that sometimes this was my fault; I was tired, unfocused, or "lost" as to my research purpose (a state, I think, that is symptomatic of most dissertation research). Other times, I think it was on the shoulders of my participants, for similar reasons. Many of my interviews took place after school, so teachers were sometimes tired and frustrated by their day. But never were my participants hesitant or only partially

engaged in our purpose. I have to give them credit for their stick-to-it-ness and focus, for there were many times when they motivated me to step up to the task, when they energized me to ask more questions and to listen deeply to their narratives. In order to illustrate the ups and downs I experienced while on the interview trail, I culled some of my research journal entries for descriptions.

> I just finished interview #1 with Meredith, and I can already tell that this is going to be great. This method is made for folks like Meredith—reflective, talkative, thoughtful…Even though the first interview is generally the "easiest," I can tell that this process with her will be easy…Now that I've had this experience with Meredith, I can see how Maria held back and how, even with a little nudging from me, couldn't crack that "outer voice" façade…What is it that allows or makes for this great chemistry with some participants and not for others? (Research Journal, May 21, 2003)

I wrote this entry early on in my process, and as I continued interviewing through the summer, I noticed myself becoming more comfortable with the process and with my stance as interviewer that, in turn, seemed to make my participants more comfortable. In regard to my comment above, "this method is made for folks like Meredith," I believe that this interview study is slightly weighted, or biased perhaps, in that nearly each of my ten participants were eager participants. Each one was willing to talk openly, each was willing to volunteer for a grueling 4½ hours of interviews, and most were willing to do this long after their school year was over. The fact that interview-based research is self-selecting is problematic in that, one could argue, only certain types of people volunteer to participate. And yet, were I to have interviewed teachers who did not openly welcome this research method, the chances are good that I would have had disappointing interviews and would not have used much of their data.

Another aspect of the interviewing process that I toyed with a bit was the duration between the three interviews. Seidman (1998) recommends allowing a week

between interviews, as it gives time for both interviewer and participant to decompress a bit, and it allows for life to happen in between. Out of necessity, I had to tweak this timeline a bit for each of my three participants who lived in New York State. Because they all lived at least 200 miles from me, I only wanted to travel to them once, which required that I interview them on a compressed schedule. Andrew was my first foray into this "compressed" interview schedule. I interviewed him, at his home in Northern New York, three times in two days. Similarly, I interviewed Cathy, at her apartment in Central New York, three times in two days. And, when I traveled to Southern New York State to interview Ian, we completed the three interviews in two days as well. Although I was skeptical at first about tinkering with the interview timeline, I found the compressed schedule to be better in some ways. And, I believe that two of my best interviews, those with Andrew and Cathy, came about partially as a result of this compressed schedule. The following is an excerpt from my research journal explaining why I liked this shortened timeframe:

> I used a compressed interview schedule with [Cathy]. I interviewed her three times in two days, which I really liked, just as I liked it with Andrew. Such an intensive interview schedule forces both of us to get mentally prepared—we knew what we were getting into, as I was very clear in my email to both Cathy and Andrew regarding the intensive interview schedule. I felt that the compressed schedule also opened the door to honesty and openness, as we were strangers sitting down together in a short period of time. Spreading the interviews out over 3 weeks or so leave too much time to get "unacquainted." When a week passes between interviews with a complete stranger, I have to recreate somewhat the feeling of safety, trust, and familiarity. (Research Journal, July 8, 2003)

The compressed schedule I used with Andrew, Cathy, and Ian also resembled a "retreat" from daily life and interruptions. By spending so much time together over two days, I felt that we really came to know one another, maybe even more so than my other

participants. The intensive four and a half hours of interviewing in two days really allowed us to focus, in our lives, almost exclusively on the interviews. During the first day of interviewing Cathy, I arrived at her house in the morning, met her, sat down with her and completed interview #1. We broke for lunch and reconvened about two hours later for interview #2. Although we had a break between interviews, knowing that another interview was to follow got us on a roll, so to speak, and I honestly feel that it allowed Cathy to be more spontaneous in her responses to my questions, more "real." The disadvantage of allowing too much time to pass between interviews is that it allows for second thoughts to crop up, facades to come back up, and life to creep in. Perhaps in my next interview study, I will experiment more with this notion of a compressed timeframe versus an extended timeframe.

Making the Work of Beginning Teachers Visible

As I begin to close this chapter in my life (a five-year research process), and this chapter in my dissertation, I have an opportunity to finally reflect on the significance of this work to me. Why did I delve into a dissertation about beginning teachers? Why does research and writing about beginning teachers matter? In other words, so what?

When I began this yearlong process of researching and writing a dissertation, I put forth in my proposal that one of my aims in my research was to push against the deficit model of so much of the literature on, and our profession's views of, the beginning teacher. As I read the research, considered the nature of "newness" and our treatment of "newness" in other realms, and critically examined the idioms with which we often use to describe the first-year teacher's experience, I was put off by the deficit-

heavy tone of much of it. This deficit view of beginning teachers is not wrong; that is, it certainly presents at least one half, if not more, of a new teacher's experience. They struggle, they flounder, they become disillusioned, and they get frustrated. And yet, this deficit view is not whole. It does not paint a realistic, holistic view of the beginning teacher. It is toward a more holistic view of the beginning teacher's experience that this dissertation was written.

As I complete this phenomenological examination of the first year of teaching, I still maintain that our newest teachers have an extremely difficult entry into the field. Their transitions from preparation to practice are rocky and the learning curve, no matter how good the preparation, is usually steep. The schools they enter are filled with idiosyncrasies, cultural nuances, and power structures with which the new teacher has to acclimate herself. In addition, the students are usually challenging in the beginning, the curriculum is almost always new to the novice teacher, and the demands and rigors of day-to-day teaching is most likely the hardest work they have ever done. Finally, few formal structures are in place in schools to support and nurture the personal and professional well being of our newest teachers. In short, the odds seem to be against them, and these characteristics of beginning teachers' experiences were indeed affirmed by my interviews.

So, my first response to the question, "So what?" is that, although there is a wealth of research on beginning teachers, it seems to me that the message has not yet been fully heard by teacher educators, administrators, and policy makers. New teachers have it tough, and somehow, despite the odds, novices like those the reader heard from in this dissertation, are able to do remarkable things. They take risks in their teaching,

they grapple with their sense of self and with their teacher persona, they value their relationships with their students, and they reach out, or try to reach out, to their colleagues and peers. There is no doubt that most novice teachers are forces for change and for positive outcomes in schools. And yet, we do not treat them very well, and we are at great risk, a 33% risk, of losing them in the first three years of their practice.

I believe it is up to some of us, as teacher educators, to invest the time and energy into investigating this phenomenon of the novice teacher more closely. It is our job, and the job of teacher researchers, mentors, and administrators to make the work and achievements of beginning teachers more visible. It is also our responsibility, I believe, to resist adopting or accepting the pervasive deficit-heavy portrait of the novice teacher, the model that depicts the floundering, stressed out first-year teacher in a classroom of chaotic and confused students. This view toward beginning teachers that is focused on the deficits of the new teacher, I have come to learn, is not the norm, though I believe the literature would lead us to believe it is. It was my first intention with this dissertation to rally against this deficit-heavy portrait of novice teachers by presenting a more balanced view of their work and lives in schools through the words and experiences of beginning teachers themselves. By moving away from the lens of "problems and concerns" to examining more deeply the kinds of difficulties and complexities that new teachers face in their first years in schools, I believe we will be better able to understand, and thus to change, the conditions under which our first-year teachers are expected to "rise to the challenge."

Finally, in presenting a more balanced (a less negative) view of the experiences of first-year teachers, I have come to understand and respect the idealism, energy, and

hopefulness that these novices represent in our teaching culture. Their professional optimism provided me with energy throughout this research process, just as I imagine that it provides them with energy day-to-day and energy to their students. But, as Seidman (1998) writes, "The narratives we shape of the participants we have interviewed are necessarily limited. Their lives go on; our presentations of them are framed and reified" (p. 111). The hopefulness of these first year teachers will forever live on in this piece of research. Yet, as their work in schools continues (they are immersed in their second year of teaching as I write), is their sense of hope or their call to service being altered or erased by the culture of schooling? As my participants are further "inducted" into the culture of teaching, I wonder about the sustainability and longevity of their hopefulness. How can schools and educators work to maintain in our new teachers a sense of hopefulness, idealism, and service to others? What can we do to prevent the squelching of spirit that so often occurs in teachers as the years go by?

APPENDIX

PORTRAITS OF TEACHER PARTICIPANTS

Because I have chosen to include my ten participants' words throughout Chapters Four, Five, Six, and Seven of this dissertation, it is important for my readers to have an understanding of who my participants are. So, below I have crafted a portrait of each participant, including biographical information as well as information on the context in which each participant taught during the 2002-2003 school year. My hope is that these portraits will provide my readers with an easy reference guide to my ten teacher participants to which they can refer throughout their reading of this dissertation.

Andrew: Andrew grew up in Western New York, where his mother and father still live and work as a nanny and as a quality inspector for a large aerospace company, respectively. After high school, Andrew worked at a tire store in order to pay his college tuition bills. A year later, he joined the Army National Guard to benefit from the Army's college tuition incentive program. As a member of the Guard, Andrew was called into active duty only twice: Once during a blizzard in Western New York and once after September 11, 2001. Andrew graduated from a state university with a degree in English and immediately enrolled in a graduate teacher education program. Upon completion of the program, Andrew began searching for a job as a high school English teacher. Andrew eventually accepted a job at North River High School in Northern New York. North River High School is located in a rural, agricultural area of Northern New York and is in close proximity to a large Army base. Hence, the student population at North River is a mix of rural and military students. During his first year at North River, Andrew was assigned to teach AIS (Academic Intervention Services), a course requirement for all students who had failed New York's standardized test, as well as

ninth grade English. Andrew is unlike all of the other ten participants in that he taught only 30 students during his first year of teaching. Andrew also spent his first year of teaching in an apprenticeship to the yearbook advisor, an advisorship he has now taken over in his second year at North River High School.

Cathy: Cathy grew up in Central New York. Her mother and father still live there and work as a family educator and for a large bottling plant, respectively. After high school, Cathy attended community college for two years and then transferred to a private college, where she earned her B.A. in English. After college, Cathy spent a year working as a special education paraprofessional in a middle school, during which time she decided she wanted to be a teacher. She enrolled in a graduate program in English education and earned both her teaching license and a Masters degree. After graduating from her Masters program, Cathy worked as a long-term substitute teacher in an ESL class before landing a teaching position as an English language arts teacher at Cherry Ridge Middle School in Central New York. As part of an eighth grade team at Cherry Ridge, Cathy works closely with the other six teachers on her team. During her first year of teaching, Cathy taught approximately 104 eighth grade students and was responsible for preparing her students for New York's eighth grade standardized assessment. Despite the gains her students made in their test scores, and despite her school's satisfaction with her teaching, Cathy received a transfer notice before the end of the 2002-2003 school year. Though Cathy is still in the same district, she is in her second year of teaching at another middle school.

Ian: Ian grew up in Pennsylvania and attended private schools for most of his K-12 education. His father was a well-respected chemical engineer and his mother was a homemaker, though also college educated like his father. Ian attended a private college during his undergraduate years in the 1970s and took a year off from college to travel in France. After graduating with a B.A. in fiction writing, Ian spent several years working odd jobs and living in various places on the East Coast, focusing on his goal of becoming a writer. After many years of trying to make it as a "starving artist," Ian decided to accept a full-time position as a personal assistant to a wealthy eccentric in New York. During this time, he met his wife and they settled down in the Hudson Valley. In his late forties, Ian decided to make a career change, although it would cost him the job security and steady salary of his 15-year position as a personal assistant. He enrolled in a graduate teacher education program at a state university and graduated with an MAT. After graduation, Ian worked for the remainder of the 2001-2002 school year as a substitute teacher in an urban school. Though Ian was frustrated by the lack of English teaching jobs in the Hudson Valley region of New York State, he and his wife were not willing to move their two children in pursuit of a teaching job. So, he spent the first few months of the 2002-2003 school year as a substitute English teacher. Ian eventually got a long-term substitute English teaching position in December 2002. He completed his first year of teaching as a long-term sub at Hudson Valley High School, where he taught tenth grade Regents and Honors English, a twelfth grade Media class, and a twelfth grade fiction class. Currently, Ian is working as a permanent substitute teacher at another high school in the Hudson Valley region of New York and as a tutor for a private educational agency.

Maria: Maria was born in Brooklyn, but moved to Eastern Massachusetts with her family when she was 3. She grew up in a large city in Eastern Massachusetts and attended public schools through twelfth grade. Her mother works as an administrative assistant at a special education school, and her father is an accountant. During high school, she was very involved with theater, the yearbook, and the school literary magazine. Because Maria had known she wanted to be a teacher since third grade, she enrolled in a large state university with the hope of matriculating into the university's teacher education program. But, during her first year of college, Maria discovered that she was overwhelmed by the size of this large state university, so she transferred to a smaller, private college, where she immediately felt more at home. During her three years at this college, Maria completed the requirements for a B.A. in English education and teacher licensure. In addition, she worked for two summers as a teacher at a special education school in Eastern Massachusetts. After graduating from college, Maria accepted a position as an English teacher at South Shore High School. During her first year of teaching at South Shore, Maria taught approximately 100 ninth and tenth grade students. For her ninth grade teaching assignment, Maria was part of a humanities team-teaching program, and she shared her ninth grade students with a history team teacher, Bob. This year, 2003-2004, Maria is in her second year of teaching English and humanities at South Shore High School.

Meredith: Meredith grew up in Western Massachusetts, where her mother worked at a hairdressing shop and her father worked as an electrician. She attended public schools through twelfth grade. After high school, Meredith briefly attended a large, state

university, but soon transferred to a private university in Eastern Massachusetts so she could be near her boyfriend. During her time in college, Meredith majored in English, completed an internship at a large, metropolitan newspaper, and spent a semester abroad in New Zealand. After she graduated with her B.A. in English, she immediately enrolled in the university's post-baccalaureate teacher education program. After taking only a few courses in teacher education, the university's program was cut. Meredith knew that she wanted to become an English teacher at this point, so she took the state's teacher licensure exam and worked for several months as a substitute teacher in public schools in Eastern Massachusetts. Frustrated by the lack of English teaching jobs in Massachusetts, Meredith accepted a position with a city in Western Massachusetts and worked for two years as a career counselor for the city's unemployed factory and industrial workers. After two years in this position, Meredith accepted a job at a private school in Western Massachusetts as a web page designer and a part-time teacher. She spent one year at that school revamping their website and teaching one tenth grade English course. The next year, 2002-2003, Meredith made another big move and accepted a full-time teaching position at Graystone High School in Central Massachusetts. During her first year of teaching, Meredith taught approximately 110 ninth and tenth grade students in college prep English. This year, Meredith is in her second year of teaching English at Graystone High School.

Tori: Tori grew up in Texas, the daughter of Chinese immigrant parents. She notes that her family was the only Asian family in her town throughout her childhood. Her mother worked at home raising two daughters and her father was a respected physician in the

town. Tori attended public schools through twelfth grade, where she was involved in the school district's gifted and talented program as well as various sports and extracurricular activities. After high school, she attended a private university in Texas, where she majored in English. During her time in college, Tori worked for two summers at a summer enrichment program for high school students. It was during her time in this position that Tori knew she wanted to become a teacher. After college, in a move that was very controversial in her family, she applied to graduate programs in education. Though her mother and father disapproved of her pursuit of a teaching career, Tori enrolled in graduate program in teacher education at an elite private college in Massachusetts. Upon completion of her graduate degree and licensure program, Tori accepted a position teaching English at Community High School, an urban pilot school in Eastern Massachusetts with a predominantly African-American student population. During her first year of teaching, Tori, like Andrew, had an unusually low number of students. She taught 30 students in tenth grade English. It is also worth noting that, during her first year of teaching, forty percent of the faculty at Community High School was new to teaching. This year, Tori is in her second year of teaching English at Community H.S.

Barbara: Barbara and her family moved a lot when she was young, and she spent her youth in Texas, Illinois, and Oklahoma. She has fond memories of growing up in such diverse communities and of having the opportunity to attend a Cherokee powwow, visiting the great museums and zoo in Chicago, and witnessing the pains of racial segregation as a 7 year old in 1960s Dallas. Her mother worked as a homemaker, and

her father was the vice president of a company that produces outdoor and hunting products. Because she moved a lot, she spent her years attending a variety of public and parochial schools. Her family finally settled in Western Massachusetts, where she eventually met her husband, who was in the Navy. After they got married, Barbara's husband got a job with the postal service, and Barbara stayed at home and worked as a mother, raising four children. After their fourth child was born, Barbara needed to return to the workforce for financial reasons. So, she worked at a children's hospital in a variety of roles. She was one of the first to be hired by the hospital to help implement a systemic computerized scheduling system, and it was in this position where Barbara's love of technology grew. In her role at the hospital, she not only did scheduling, but also counseled parents and patients, and worked as a nurse in the operating room. She worked at this hospital for many years, and her responsibilities grew and grew until the position finally became overwhelming. During this time, Barbara's husband was dying of cancer. Barbara decided to quit her job and to spend time with her husband and children. After he died, a year later, she took a year to mourn and to figure out where to go from there. She enrolled at a nearby community college and graduated with her Associates degree in English. She was then accepted into a nontraditional student program at a Seven Sisters College, where she completed a B.A. in English. After graduating, Barbara accepted a position teaching English at Butterfield High School, a suburban school in a wealthy community in Western Massachusetts. During her first year of teaching, Barbara taught approximately 80 ninth and tenth grade students and served as a member of the school's technology committee. This year, Barbara is

completing her second year of teaching at Butterfield High School, and she is enrolled in a graduate program in education at a nearby private college.

Rebecca: Rebecca grew up in rural, Western Massachusetts, where her mother and father worked as a teacher and a professor, respectively. They also ran a pizza shop out of their house, and Rebecca worked at that pizza shop throughout her young adulthood. She attended public schools through eighth grade and then attended a private school, as a day student, for grades nine through twelve. After high school, Rebecca enrolled at a private liberal arts college in Eastern Massachusetts, but due to financial reasons, decided to transfer to a state university. During this time, Rebecca worked summers as an assistant to a glassblower, which is where her fascination with glassblowing was born. She withdrew from the state university after three semesters and worked full-time in a glassblowing studio in Western Massachusetts. She eventually attended glassblowing school in North Carolina, but after two years in glassblowing, Rebecca decided to return to college and began working as a waitress to help pay the bills. After graduating from college, Rebecca worked as a store manager for a year and a half while contemplating graduate school. She applied to a graduate program in sociology at a large, public university and was accepted. Before enrolling in the program, Rebecca took a new job as a paraprofessional in a middle school. For six months she worked as a one-on-one aide with a student, and in the fall of 1999, she enrolled as a full-time student in a graduate program. While in her second year of the sociology program, Rebecca took a course in education, and then began to pursue English teacher licensure. In 2002-2003, Rebecca accepted a position as an English teacher at Valley Technical

High School in Western Massachusetts. In the fall of her first year, Rebecca was considered a paid intern at the school, as she was completing her student teaching requirements while working as a full-time teacher. During her first year, Rebecca taught approximately 95 ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students and served as the advisor to the school's Gay Straight Alliance (GSA). This year, Rebecca is completing her second year of teaching English at Valley Tech High School.

Valerie: Valerie grew up in Connecticut with her two siblings and parents. Her parents still live there; her father has worked for 30 years as a crew leader for the state Department of Transportation, and her mother is a bookkeeper for several retail stores. Valerie attended public schools in grades K-12, and after graduation, she enrolled at a large, state university where she studied English. During her time in college, Valerie studied at Oxford University for a semester. When she returned to her home college, Valerie began to pursue English teacher licensure, a program of study that she was able to finish during her four-year undergraduate degree program. After graduating with a B.A. in English and with an English teacher license, Valerie accepted a teaching position at South Shore High School in Eastern Massachusetts, where she was assigned to teach ninth grade English and humanities, as well as eleventh grade English. Like Maria, who also teaches at South Shore H.S., Valerie was assigned a teaching partner in her first year, an experienced history teacher with whom she taught their shared humanities students. In her first year of teaching, Valerie taught approximately 125 students at South Shore High School, a large, comprehensive high school with over

1,800 students. South Shore High School has a largely minority student population, as the school draws students from a large, neighboring metropolitan area.

Sarah: Sarah grew up in New Jersey, and her early school experience was marked by many transitions from Hebrew Day Schools to public schools. By seventh grade, Sarah enrolled in a university-affiliated preparatory school, an environment in which she flourished as a student and as an actor. During her high school years, Sarah visited Israel through her involvement with a Jewish Youth Organization. She describes this visit to Israel as being central to shaping her identity. After high school, Sarah enrolled in a small, private college in Upstate New York, but left halfway through her first year due to financial reasons. She spent her second year of college at a community college, and then transferred to a large, state university, where she majored in English. During this time, she continued her involvement with the Jewish Youth Organization, working as an advisor and youth organizer. After college, Sarah moved to New York City, where she worked in human resources. Though she was excited by life in the city, Sarah found her work to be less than rewarding, and she missed her direct involvement with children. In the fall of 1998, Sarah embarked on the Boston to New York AIDS ride, an experience that she calls "life changing." Spending day after day on her bike, Sarah was afforded time to think about her future and her career aspirations. Soon after, she applied to graduate programs in English teacher education, to her parents' disappointment. She moved north to New England and enrolled in graduate school. After completing her Masters in Education and teacher licensure program, she accepted a position teaching English language arts at an urban middle school, The Parker School,

in Eastern Massachusetts. In her first year of teaching, Sarah taught approximately 150 students in seventh grade and was the advisor to the school's theater program. Almost half of the students at The Parker School are recently arrived immigrants from Bosnia, Columbia and Brazil. This year, Sarah is completing her second year of teaching English language arts at a different urban middle school in Massachusetts.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ammer, C. (1997). *The American heritage dictionary of idioms.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Applebee, A. (1974). *Tradition and reform in the teaching of English.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Apple, M. (1994). Series editors' introduction. In A. Gitlin (Ed.), *Power and method: Political activism and educational research* (pp. ix-xi). New York: Routledge.

Ayers, W. (2001). *To teach: The journey of a teacher* (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.

Baker, C. D., & Johnson, G. (1998). Interview talk as professional practice. *Language and Education, 12*(4), 229-242.

Ball, S., & Goodson, I. (1985). *Teachers' lives and careers.* London: The Falmer Press.

Becker, H., Greer, B., Hughes, E., & Strauss, A. (1961). *The boys in white.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Berliner, D. (1988, February). *The development of expertise in pedagogy.* Paper presented at the meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, New Orleans, LA.

Berliner, D. (1997). Foreword. In R.V. Bullough & K. Baughman (Eds.), *"First-year teacher" eight years later: An inquiry into teacher development* (pp. ix-xi). New York: Teachers College Press.

Blase, J. J., & Greenfield, W. (1982). On the meaning of being a high school teacher: The beginning years. *The High School Journal*, May, 263-271.

Blase, J. J. (1987). Political interactions among teachers: Sociocultural contexts in the schools. *Urban Education, 22*(3), 286-309.

Borko, H. (1986). Clinical teacher education: The induction years. In J.V. Hoffman & S.A. Edwards (Eds.), *Reality and reform in clinical teacher education* (pp. 45-63). New York: Random House.

Borrowman, M. (Ed.). (1965). *Teacher education in America: A documentary history.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Britzman, D. (1991). *Practice makes practice: A critical study of learning to teach.* Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Bruner, J. (1986). *Actual minds, possible worlds.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bryk, A., Camburn, E., & Louis, K. S. (1999). Professional community in Chicago elementary schools: Facilitating factors and organizational consequences. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 35*, 751-781.

Bullough, R. V., Jr., (1989). *First-year teacher: A case study*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Bullough, R. V., Knowles, J. G. & Crow, N. A. (1989). Teacher self-concept and student culture in the first year of teaching. *Teachers College Record, 91*(2), 209-233.

Bullough, R. V., & Baughman, K. (1997). *"First-year teacher" eight years later: An inquiry into teacher development.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Bullough, R. V., & Gitlin, A. (1996). *Becoming a student of teaching.* New York: Garland.

Bullough, R., Knowles, J. G., & Crow, N. A. (1992). *Emerging as a teacher*. London: Routledge.

Burden, P. (1981, November). *Teachers' perceptions of their personal and professional development*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Midwestern Educational Research Association, Des Moines, IA.

Callahan, M., & Low, B. E. (2004). At the crossroads of expertise: The risky business of teaching popular culture. *English Journal, 93*(3), 52-57.

Carter, K. (1993). The place of story in the study of teaching and teacher education. *Educational Researcher, 22*(1), 5-12, 18.

Carter, K., & Richardson, V. (1989). A curriculum for an initial-year-of-teaching program. *The Elementary School Journal, 89*(4), 405-419.

Christenbury, L. (2000). *Making the journey: Being and becoming a teacher of English language arts.* Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook

Clift, R. (1991). Learning to teach English—maybe: A study of knowledge development. *Journal of Teacher Education, 42*(5), 357-372.

Coles, R. (1993). *The call of service*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Corcoran, E. (1981). Transition shock: The beginning teacher's paradox. *Journal of Teacher Education, 32*(3), 19-23.

Corley, E. (1998, October). *First-year teachers: Strangers in strange lands.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwestern Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED424216).

Cremin, L. (1970). *American education: The colonial experience, 1607-1783.* New York: Harper & Row.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). *Solving the dilemma of teacher supply, demand, and standards: How we can ensure a competent, caring, and qualified teacher for every child.* Washington, DC: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

Dixon, J. (1969). *Growth through English: A report based on the Dartmouth seminar, 1966.* Reading, England: National Association for the Teaching of English.

Doecke, B., Brown, J., & Loughran, J. (2000). Teacher talk: the role of story and anecdote in constructing professional knowledge for beginning teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 16,* 335-348.

Dollase, R. H. (1992). *Voices of beginning teachers: Visions & realities.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Douglass, B., & Moustakas, C. (1984). *Heuristic inquiry: The internal search to know.* Detroit, MI: Center for Humanistic Studies.

Eddy, E. (1969). *Becoming a teacher: The passage to professional status.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Elbaz, F. (1991). Research on teachers' knowledge: The evolution of a discourse. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 23*(1), 1-19.

Elbow, P. (1990). *What is English?* New York: Modern Language Association.

Elsbree, W. (1939). *The American teacher.* New York: American Book Company.

Etheridge, C. P. (1989). Acquiring the teaching culture: How beginners embrace practices different from university teachings. *Qualitative Studies in Education, 2*(4), 299-313.

Featherstone, H. (1993). Learning from the first years of classroom teaching: The journey in, the journey out. *Teachers College Record, 95*(1), 93-112.

Feiman-Nemser, S. (1983). Learning to teach. In L. S. Shulman & G. Sykes (Eds.), *Handbook of teaching and policy* (pp. 150-170). New York: Longman.

Feiman-Nemser, S., & Buchmann, M. (1985). Pitfalls of experience in teacher preparation. *Teachers College Record, 87*(1), 53-65.

Feiman-Nemser, S., Schwille, S., Carver, C., & Yusko, B. (1999). *A conceptual review of the literature on new teacher induction.* Michigan State University: National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching.

Feiman-Nemser, S. (2001). From preparation to practice: Designing a continuum to strengthen and sustain teaching. *Teachers College Record, 103*(6), 1013-1055.

Feiman-Nemser, S. (2003, February). *The multiple meanings of teacher induction: Implications for policy and practice*. Address given at the Fifth Annual New Teacher Symposium, San Jose, CA.

Fisher, C. J., Fox, D., & Paille, E. (1996). Teacher education research in the English language arts and reading. In In J. Sikula, T. Buttery, & E. Guyton (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education,* (pp. 410-441). New York: MacMillan.

Fox, D. (1993, December). *The relationship between beginning secondary teachers' conceptions of English and their instructional practices: Two case studies.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Reading Conference, Charleston, SC. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED366949).

Fox, D. (1995). From English major to English teacher: Two case studies. *English Journal, 84*(2), 17-25.

Fox, S. M., & Singletary, T. J. (1986). Deductions about supportive induction. *Journal of Teacher Education, 37*(1), 12-15.

Fullan, M., & Hargreaves, A. (1991). *What's worth fighting for in your school?* New York: Teachers College Press.

Fuller, F. (1969). Concerns of teachers: A developmental conceptualization. *American Educational Research Journal, 6*, 207-226.

Gallagher, C., & Stahlnecker, K. (2002, April). *Recreating teacher development through productive disequilibrium.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Ganser, T. (1999, April). *Reconsidering the relevance of Veenman's (1984) meta-analysis of the perceived problems of beginning teachers.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Quebec. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED429964).

Gehrke, N. (1991). Seeing our way to better helping of beginning teachers. *Educational Forum, 55*(3), 233-242.

Gless, J., & Moir, E. (n.d.). Supporting beginning teachers with heart and mind: A decade of lessons learned from the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project. Retrieved October 29, 2002 from www.newteachercenter.org/article-withheartandmind.htm

Goddard, J. T., & Foster, R. Y. (2001). The experiences of neophyte teachers: A critical constructivist assessment. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 17*, 349-365.

Gold, Y. (1996). Beginning teacher support. In J. Sikula, T. Buttery, & E. Guyton (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education,* (pp. 548-594). New York: Macmillan.

Goodson, F. T. (1998). New teachers, teacher culture, and school reform. In Ira Hayes (Ed.), *Great beginnings: Reflections and advice for new English language arts teachers and the people who mentor them* (pp. 49-54). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Greene, M. (1978). *Landscapes of learning*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Griffin, G. (1989). A state program for the initial years of teaching. *The Elementary School Journal, 89*(4), 395-403).

Grommon, A. H. (Ed.). (1963). *The education of teacher of English for American schools and colleges.* New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Grossman, P. (1990). *The making of a teacher: Teacher knowledge and teacher education.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Grossman, P. (1991). The selection and organization of content for secondary English: Sources for teachers' knowledge. *English Education, 23*(1), 39-53.

Grossman, P., Thompson, C., & Valencia, S. (Winter, 2002). The impact of district policy on beginning teachers. *ERS Spectrum, 20*(1), 10-20.

Hargreaves, A. (1995). Development and desire: A postmodern perspective. In T. R. Guskey & M. Huberman (Eds.), *Professional development in education: New paradigms and practices* (pp.9-33). New York: Teachers College Press.

Hargreaves, A., & Jacka, N. (1995). Induction or seduction? Postmodern patterns of preparing to teach. *Peabody Journal of Education, 70*(3), 41-63.

Hebert, E., & Worthy, T. (2001). Does the first year of teaching have to be a bad one? A case study of success. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 17*, 897-911.

Henke, R. R., Chen, X., & Geis, S. (2000). *Progress through the teacher pipeline: 1992-93 college graduates and elementary/secondary school teaching as of 1997.* Washington, DC: National Center for Educational Statistics.

Howey, K., & Zimpher, N. (1989). Preservice teacher educators' role in programs for beginning teachers. *The Elementary School Journal, 89*(4), 451-470.

Huberman, M. (1993). *The lives of teachers.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Johnson, S. M. (2004, February). *Finders and keepers: Schools that attract and retain new teachers.* Paper presentation at the New Teacher Symposium, San Jose, CA.

Johnson, S. M., & Birkeland, S. E. (2002). *Pursuing "a sense of success": New teachers explain their career decisions.* Harvard University Graduate School of Education, Project on the Next Generation of Teachers.

Joyce, B. (1984). Dynamic disequilibrium: The intelligence of growth. *Theory Into Practice, 23*(1), 26-34.

Kardos, S., Moore Johnson, S., Peske, H., Kauffman, D., & Liu, E. (2001). Counting on colleagues: New teachers encounter the professional culture of their schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 37*(2), 250-290.

Kauffman, D., Johnson, S. M., Kardos, S. E., Liu, E., & Peske, H. (2002). "Lost at sea": New teachers' experiences with curriculum and assessment. *Teachers College Record, 104*(2), 273-300.

Keates, W. (1997). *Proceed with caution: The diary of the first year at one of America's largest, most prestigious law firms.* Chicago: Harcourt Brace.

Kegan, R. (1982). *The evolving self: Problem and process in human development.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Kent, S. (2000). Problems of beginning teachers. Comparing graduates Bachelor's and Master's level teacher preparation programs. *The Teacher Educator, 35*, 83-96.

Knowles, J. G. (1994). Metaphors as windows on a personal history: A beginning teacher's experience. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 21*, 37-66.

Kutz, E., & Roskelly, H. (1991). *An unquiet pedagogy.* Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook.

Lacey, C. (1977). *The socialization of teachers.* London: Methuen.

Lawson, H. (1983). Toward a model of teacher socialization in physical education: Entry into schools, teachers' role orientations, and longevity in teaching (Part 2). *Journal of Teaching Physical Education*, Fall, 3-15.

Lightfoot, S. L. (1983). The lives of teachers. In L.S. Shulman & G. Sykes (Eds.), *Handbook of teaching and policy* (pp. 241-260). New York: Longman.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Little, J. W. (1990). The persistence of privacy: Autonomy and initiative in teachers' professional relations. *Teachers College Record, 91*(4), 509-536.

Lortie, D. (1966). Teacher socialization: The Robinson Crusoe model. In H. Hermanowitz (Ed.), *The real world of the beginning teacher*. Washington, DC: National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards.

Lortie, D. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

MacDonald, D. (1999). Teacher attrition: A review of literature. *Teaching & Teacher Education, 15*, 835-848.

Marshall, J. (1981). Making sense as a personal process. In P. Reason & J. Rowan (Eds.), *Human Inquiry* (pp.395-399). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Massachusetts Department of Education. (2001). *Guidelines for induction programs*. Malden, MA: Massachusetts Department of Education.

Massarick, F. (1981). The interviewing process re-examined. In P. Reason & J. Rowan (Eds.), *Human Inquiry* (pp. 201-206). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

McLaughlin, M. W., & Talbert, J. E. (2001). *Professional communities and the work of high school teaching*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mishler, E. G. (1986). *Research interviewing*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Moir, E. (2004, February). *Soaring to new heights*. Welcome address at the General Session of the New Teacher Symposium, San Jose, CA.

Moir, E., & Gless, J. (2001). Quality induction: An investment in new teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 28*, 109-114.

Morris, W. (Ed.). (1979). *The American heritage dictionary of the English language*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Moustakas, C. (1990). *Heuristic research: Design, methodology, and applications.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

National Education Association (NEA). (2003). *Status of the American public school teacher 2000-2001.* Washington, D.C.: NEA.

New Teacher Academy. (2002, June). *New Teacher Academy Program Description.* New York: Teachers College, Columbia University & TC Innovations.

Nieto, S. (2003). *What keeps teachers going?* New York: Teachers College Press.

Noddings, N. (1986). Fidelity in teaching, teacher education, and research for teaching. *Harvard Educational Review, 56*(4), 496-510.

Noddings, N. (2004). War, critical thinking, and self-understanding. *Phi Delta Kappan, 85*(7), 489-495.

Olson, M. R., & Osborne, J. W. (1991). Learning to teach: The first year. *Teaching & Teacher Education, 7*(4), 331-343.

Paget, M. (1983). Experience and knowledge. *Human Studies, 6*, 67-90.

Pajak, E., & Blase, J. (1989). The impact of teachers' personal lives on professional role enactment: A qualitative analysis. *American Educational Research Journal, 26*(2), 283-310.

Palmer, P. (1998). *The courage to teach.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Peske, H., Liu, E., Johnson, S. M., Kauffman, D., & Kardos, S. M. (2001). The next generation of teachers: Changing conceptions of a career in teaching. *Phi Delta Kappan, 83*(4), 304-311.

Pollard, A. (1982). A model of classroom coping strategies. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 3*, 19-37.

Ritchie, J. S., & Wilson, D. E. (1993). Dual apprenticeships: Subverting and supporting critical teaching. *English Education*, *25*(2), 67-83.

Reason, P., & Rowan, J. (Eds.). (1981). *Human Inquiry.* Chichester, England: John Wiley & Sons.

Rogers, D. L., & Babinski, L. M. (2002). *From isolation to conversation: Supporting new teachers' development.* Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Rose, M. (1995). *Possible lives*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Rust, F. O. (1994a). Professional conversations: New teachers explore teaching through conversation, story, and narrative. *Journal of Teacher Education, 15*, 367-380.

Rust, F. O. (1994b). The first year of teaching: It's not what they expected. *Teaching & Teacher Education, 10*(2), 205-217.

Ryan, K. (Ed.). (1970). *Don't smile until Christmas*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ryan, K. (1992). *The roller coaster year: Essays by and for beginning teachers*. New York: Harper Collins.

Ryan, K., Newman, K., Mager, G., Applegate, J., Lasley, T., Flora, R., & Johnston, J. (1980). *Biting the apple: Accounts of first-year teachers*. New York: Longman.

Santa Cruz (CA) New Teacher Project. (n.d.). Project benefits. Retrieved September 9, 2002 from http://www.newteachercenter.org.

Sarason, S. (1996). *Revisiting "The Culture of School and the Problem of Change."* New York: Teachers College Press.

Schein, E. H. (1992). *Organizational culture and leadership* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schempp, P., & Graber, K. (1992). Teacher socialization from a dialectical perspective: Pretraining through induction. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education, 11*, 329-348.

Schempp, P., Sparkes, A., & Templin, T. (1993). The micropolitics of teacher induction. *American Educational Research Journal, 30*(3), 447-472.

Schutz, A. (1967). *The phenomenology of the social world*. Chicago: Northwestern University Press.

Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.

Serpell, Z. (April, 2000). *Beginning teacher induction: A review of the literature*. Paper presented at the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, Washington, DC.

Sikes, P. (1985). The life cycle of the teacher. In S. Ball & I. Goodson (Eds.), *Teachers' lives and careers* (pp.27-60). London: The Falmer Press

Smagorinsky, P., Lakly, A., & Johnson, T. S. (2002). Acquiescence, accommodation, and resistance in learning to teach within a prescribed curriculum. *English Education, 34*(3), 187-213.

Sprinthall, N. A., & Thies-Sprinthall, L. (1983). The teacher as an adult learner: A cognitive-developmental view. In G. Griffin (Ed), *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education* (pp.13-35). Chicago: NSSE.

Stark, S. (1989). *A phenomenological journey towards understanding the lifeworlds of two beginning teachers*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland.

Stark, S. (1991). Toward an understanding of the beginning teacher experience: Curricular insights for teacher education. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision, 6*(4), 294-311.

Talbert, J. E., & McLaughlin, M. W. (1996). Teacher professionalism in local school contexts. In I. F. Goodson & A. Hargreaves (Eds.). *Teachers' professional lives* (pp. 127-153). Washington, DC: Falmer Press.

Tickle, L. (1999). Identity and induction. In R. P. Lipka (Ed.), *The role of self in teacher development* (pp. 123-141). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Unger, K. (2003, February). *The New Teacher Academy*. Paper presented at New Teacher Symposium, San Jose, CA.

van Manen, M. (1977). Linking ways of knowing with ways of being practical. *Curriculum Inquiry, 6*(3), 205-228.

van Manen, M. (1984). Practicing phenomenological writing. *Phenomenology and Pedagogy, 2*(1), 36-69.

van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Veenman, S. (1984). Perceived problems of beginning teachers. *Review of Educational Research, 54*(2), 143-178.

Vinz, R. (1995). Opening moves: Reflections on the first year of teaching. *English Education, 27*, 158-207.

Vonk, J. H. C. (1983). Problems of the beginning teacher. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 6*(2), 133-150.

Waller, W. (1939). *The sociology of teaching*. New York: Wiley.

White, J. J. (1989). Student teaching as a rite of passage. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 20*, 177-195.

Wildman, T., Niles, J., Magliaro, S., & McLaughlin, R. A. (1989). Teaching and learning to teach: The two roles of beginning teachers. *Elementary School Journal, 89*(4), 471-488.

Zeichner, K., & Tabachnick, R. (1985). The development of teacher perspectives: social strategies and institutional controls in the socialization of beginning teachers. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 7*, 1-25.

Zeichner, K., & Gore, J. (1990). Teacher socialization. In W.R. Houston (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teacher education* (pp.329-348). New York: MacMillan.